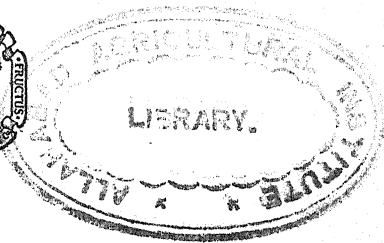


# NORMAL YOUTH AND ITS EVERYDAY PROBLEMS

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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455

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TO  
MISS GRACE ABBOTT

WHO, AS CHIEF OF THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU,  
HAS BROUGHT TO THE PARENTS AND CHILDREN  
OF THIS COUNTRY MUCH THAT HAS CON-  
TRIBUTED TO THEIR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS



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## *PREFACE*

IN an attempt to be helpful to parents, teachers, nurses, camp directors and counselors, leaders of recreation groups, and others interested in the training and development of youth, this book has been written. Particular emphasis has been placed upon that period of life which occupies the second decade, commonly known as the period of "adolescence."

The experience and material on which the book is based have been drawn from the varied sources constituting that large social environment in which the great mass of young people participate, including the home, public and private school, the college, summer camp, and other such places where these young people spend their time.

From the numerous and varied problems presented by these young people, there have been selected those which were considered as being most significant in their bearing on the welfare of the child and, for some reason or other, often least understood by those who are endeavoring to help the adolescent. An effort has been made to illustrate many of these problems with brief descriptive stories of actual cases, without, however, including those in which the boy or girl was brought before the juvenile court, sent to a correctional school or reformatory, or otherwise institutionalized because of delinquent conduct, parental neglect, mental deficiency, or other serious handicaps. This latter group has been excluded from the discussion not because their actual behavior differs in any fundamental way from that of the more fortunate group whose difficulties are

## Preface

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dealt with privately, but because the opportunities and resources of the one group are so radically different from those of the other that it would prove impractical to include them both in the same discussion.

Certain questions relative to behavior have been constantly kept in mind. How much of the behavior under consideration has had its true motivation on a conscious level and how much on an unconscious level? What must be approved and what must be disapproved? What can be attributed to inherent tendencies and what can be considered in terms of environment? What portion of all human behavior leading to inefficiency and unhappiness might have been prevented had the knowledge at hand been utilized wisely? What may we expect or hope that the future will bring forth in the way of valuable knowledge as to the art of living? What type of behavior seems wise and expedient, and what type unwise?

These are just a few of the questions with which those interested in human behavior are confronted in their attempt to understand some of the driving forces behind conduct.

There has been no attempt to bring into the discussion of the case material the different interpretations of the conduct under consideration that might have been expressed by the exponents of the varied schools of psychology. This would have served a useful purpose to only a limited number of readers and undoubtedly would have been confusing to the majority. An effort has been made to keep in mind the question as to what were the factors most likely to have precipitated the problem under discussion, and what changes in the mental attitudes of the adult and adolescent; and what modification of the existing circumstances and conditions can be brought about with the facilities at hand that will tend toward the stabilization of youth during this

## Preface

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important period of life. The responsibility of the training, education, and, to a large extent, the experiences to which youth is to be subjected is in the hands of parents and teachers, and it is for them that the book has been written.

The contents of this book represent not only the author's own experience with youth and its problems as seen in his private office, preparatory schools, and colleges, but are drawn freely from those who have had similar interests and experiences.

To Miss Mona Volkert the author expresses his appreciation for her untiring efforts in getting the manuscript ready for publication, and acknowledges his indebtedness to her for much original material and many ideas without which the book would be far less readable.

To Miss Margaret Saunders and Miss Betty Porter appreciation is extended for reading and criticizing the various chapters, while to Mrs. Evelyn S. Abbott and Miss Gertrude Dyer acknowledgment is made for their interest and effort in the actual preparation of the manuscript here presented.

D. A. T.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
INTRODUCTION <i>by</i> WILLIAM A. NEILSON . . . . .	xiii
CHAPTER	
I. ADOLESCENCE . . . . .	I
What Are the Problems . . . . .	6
II. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	14
General Physical Growth . . . . .	14
Maturing of the Reproductive System . . . . .	15
Physical Hygiene . . . . .	16
Behavior Problems Associated with Phys- ical Development . . . . .	23
Problems of Physical Growth . . . . .	23
Poor Posture . . . . .	27
Disorders of the Skin . . . . .	29
III. ADJUSTMENT TO MATURING SEX DRIVES . . . . .	37
Sex Talk and Reading . . . . .	48
Autoerotic Practices . . . . .	54
Masturbation . . . . .	54
Homosexuality . . . . .	60
Heterosexuality . . . . .	66
Petting . . . . .	67
Conclusion . . . . .	71
IV. INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES AND DISABILITIES . . . . .	73
Intelligence Tests . . . . .	75
Intellectual Inferiority . . . . .	78
Intellectual Mediocrity . . . . .	87
Intellectual Superiority . . . . .	99
V. THE TOTAL PERSONALITY . . . . .	III

## Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. EDUCATIONAL MALADJUSTMENTS . . . .	152
Inadequate Intellectual Equipment . . . .	153
Inadequate Preparation . . . . .	156
Lack of Interest or Motivation . . . .	158
Emotional Handicaps . . . . .	163
VII. CONDUCT PROBLEMS, I: UNDESIRABLE HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS . .	182
VIII. CONDUCT PROBLEMS, II: DELINQUENCY, NEU- ROSES, AND OTHER FORMS OF ESCAPE FROM REALITY . . . . .	214
Delinquency . . . . .	215
Stealing . . . . .	223
Cheating . . . . .	234
Running Away . . . . .	239
"Unmanageableness" . . . . .	246
Neuroses . . . . .	256
Alcoholism . . . . .	264
IX. PROBLEMS OF THE SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT . .	271
Behavior Problems in the Educational In- stitution . . . . .	273
Homosexual Attachments . . . . .	297
Behavior Problems in Industry . . . .	305
X. EDUCATION . . . . .	318
XI. CONCERNING PARENTS . . . . .	337
Adoptive and Foster Parents . . . .	351
INDEX . . . . .	363



## INTRODUCTION

OUR ancestors faced many of the facts of life more frankly than we do. Among other evidences of this are the manuals that have come down to us from the Middle Ages known among scholars as "Conduct Books." These interesting compilations dealt with a wide range of topics, from the proper training of a young prince for his future rôle of ruler down to injunctions against picking your nose or throwing the bone you had gnawed at dinner over instead of under the table. They were addressed to parents and children, to boys and girls; and while some were openly aimed at social and worldly success, others were more or less sensible hygienic instructions or lofty spiritual exhortations. The notable thing about them was that they candidly recognized the need of the young human being to be taught almost everything necessary for healthy and decent living, and cultivated no reticences on the tacit assumption that "nature" would look out for things.

With the growth of elegance and the increase (or change) of conventions, we began to hide the etiquette book at the back of the shelves, apparently assuming that a well-bred youth knew its contents by instinct; we banned the mention of many natural processes and phenomena; we took for granted more and more that most of what concerned the birth and nurture of children, apart from the purely intellectual matters entrusted to the schoolmaster, was instinctively known to parents or could be safely left to oral tradition. Thus, long after modern physical science had got well under way, and after centuries of discussion on the training of the mind, the facts and principles affecting our

## Introduction

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emotions and forming the basis of happy living in the family remained comparatively unexplored.

Fortunately we are at last emerging from this period of neglect. During the last generation great strides have been made in the understanding of the causes of happiness and unhappiness, and many age-long misunderstandings are being cleared up. Physical ailments are often found to have mental causes, mental difficulties to have emotional causes, emotional disturbances to have social causes. The treatment of human ills, despite the growth of specialization, is more and more seen to require a view of the whole picture, and the letting in of light and air is found to be a wholesome essential, not merely for the diagnosis and treatment of disease, but for guidance in normal healthy living.

In this advance the psychiatrist has been a most potent agent, not merely through his personal practice, but through the influence of his point of view and his methods on a wide variety of persons concerned with the health of youth. The wise physician, whatever his attitude towards the various schools of psychiatry, is tending to increase the attention he has always given to some degree to mental and emotional factors; we of the colleges and schools have, through psychiatry, been led to see the need of counselors who are skilled in emotional matters if we are to be effective in the developing of mind and character; the church is welcoming the aid of a study with whose rudimentary stages it has long been in alliance; and, most important of all, fathers and mothers are realizing that there is a science and an art of parenthood which call for serious study and practice.

Among the psychiatrists who have given special attention to the problems of adolescence, Dr. Thom is distinguished for the range of his experience as well as the success of his efforts. He has had abundant opportunities for the study of

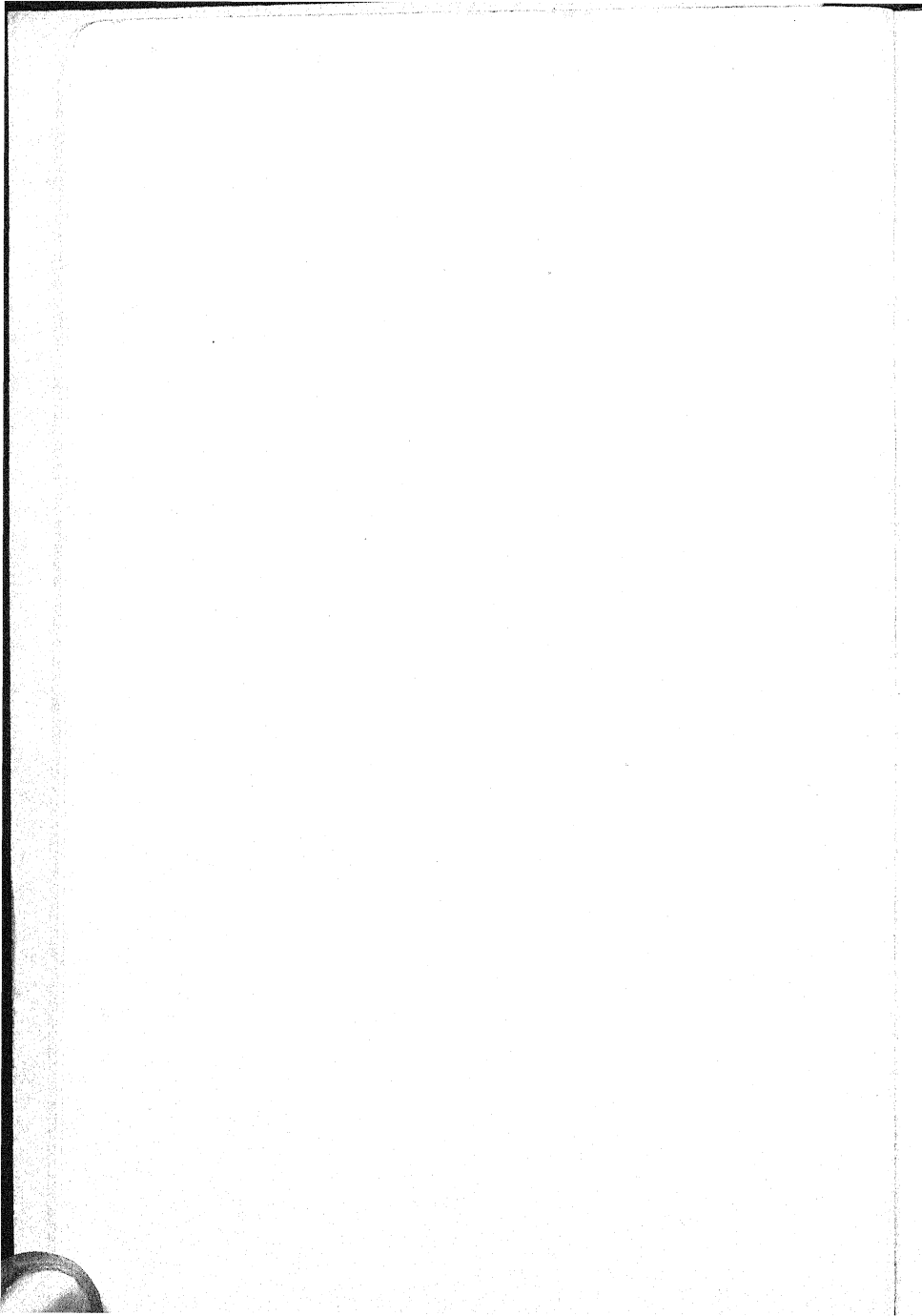
## Introduction

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family problems, has worked long and successfully in schools and colleges, and has observed the effects of various industrial occupations. For several years I have had occasion to watch his procedures in the handling of cases arising among the students of Smith College. I have been impressed with his sagacity, his insight, his freedom from the control of fads and panaceas. I have been grateful for his numerous successes. For these reasons I am glad he has written this book, giving to a wider public the benefit of his experience and his wisdom.

It is not a treatise on morbid psychology nor on delinquent or defective children. It is a volume of information about the problems that normally arise in the passage from childhood to the adult stage, and of advice about how these may best be treated to avoid unhappiness at the time and more serious consequences later. No matter how well-descended or how carefully guarded boys and girls may be, crises and dilemmas will arise which need wise counsel and tactful treatment. Parents and teachers who know enough to know their own ignorance will be grateful for the help Dr. Thom puts within their reach in this book.

WILLIAM A. NEILSON



# NORMAL YOUTH AND ITS EVERYDAY PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER I

### ADOLESCENCE

SPANNING the gulf between childhood and adulthood comes one of the most interesting and important periods in the entire life cycle. During these intervening years the individual stretches back and clings tenaciously to the pleasures and protection of childhood with one arm, while with the other he reaches out to grasp some of the privileges and responsibilities of maturity. Obviously there is no well-defined beginning or ending to such a period of transition; it can only merge imperceptibly with the past and the future and serve the purpose of coördinating the training, experience, and education of the former with the actual obligations and demands of the latter.

The term *adolescence* which is applied to this period is an unfortunate one because of its connotations. To some, the word refers to sexual development, and the behavior of this period is thought to be dependent on mysterious physiological changes. This is evidently due simply to confusion with puberty. To others, adolescence means a period in which strange ebullient forces work for the unrestrained behavior which is thought peculiar to that age. Still others speak solemnly of the "efflorescence of a new psychic force" and think of these

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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years as possessing a unique spiritual quality for the individual. However, the word *adolescence* means in its Latin derivation merely "to grow to maturity." Beginning with puberty, adolescence is usually considered arbitrarily and purely for convenience as including the years from 12 to 20. It is with this latter meaning that the term *adolescence* is used in this book.

Even this concept of adolescence, as a period of years between and merging with childhood and adulthood, is essentially a concept for our own civilization. Among primitive peoples and peoples whose lives are little more than a following of instinctive behavior patterns there is no period of adolescence. A child remains a child until puberty, and then, as definitely as if he crosses a threshold, he becomes an adult. And though such a child might be tempted to cast reluctant backward glances to the "pleasures and protection of childhood," he has little opportunity for vacillating between his past and his future. For puberty marks his physical maturity—the only maturity important in a simple cultural group—and it is recognized as the sign of adulthood not only by his immediate family but also by his entire tribe.

As entering adulthood means assuming new duties and responsibilities, primitive peoples have certain requirements which the pubescent child must meet: the boy must learn to hunt and fight, and the girl to prepare the food and clothing required by her people; the boy has to be initiated into the folkways and tribal laws, the girl into the lore surrounding her function as wife and mother. But entering adulthood also means receiving new privileges—the privileges of mating and of membership in the tribe, and therefore the candidate has to meet cer-

## Adolescence

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tain tests: the boy has to give evidence of his physical strength and prowess, his skill in hunting, and his ability to endure pain and discomfort; and the girl, to a lesser degree, has to give evidence of such feminine tribal virtues as submissiveness, obedience, and possibly strength and endurance. These initiations and tests are not purely personal and private matters. They are participated in by the entire tribe, often with the exclusion of either sex, and they are formally celebrated with the addition of such special ordeals and rites as knocking out one of the candidate's teeth, tattooing his skin, or circumcising him. The celebration may be concluded with some symbolical performance as, for example, a dramatic representation of the pretended death and resurrection of the pubescent child to indicate the passing of his soul from his own body into the totem of his tribe.<sup>1</sup>

Pubic ceremonies have been performed for centuries all over the world, and in this brief discussion no attempt is being made to survey the various practices, to account for their origin, to show how and why most of them have been abandoned, or to present the various interpretations of their significance. The purpose of this discussion is merely to point out that, although these ceremonies have long been regarded as indicating an early recognition of the special characteristics of adolescence, they can be interpreted far more simply as being merely the recognition of maturity and the preparation for adulthood.

Accepting this very simple explanation of pubic ceremonies as marking the entrance to adulthood, our whole

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of pubic ceremonies, see Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 689 ff.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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concept of adolescence takes on a new significance, vastly illuminating to the so-called adolescent problems. For even among some of those uncivilized peoples who have dropped their primitive customs and the observance of these special rites, puberty does not occur unnoticed. In describing the "coming of age" of Samoan girls, for instance, one observer writes, "There was no sense of shame connected with puberty, nor any need of concealment. Pre-adolescent children took the news that a girl had reached puberty, a woman had had a baby, a boat had come from Ofu, or a pig had been killed by a falling boulder with the same insouciance—all bits of diverting gossip. . . ." <sup>2</sup> But in our own civilization the interesting bodily changes which the growing boy and girl experience are neither hailed as occasion for initiatory rites and ceremonies or mysterious isolation, on the one hand, nor for "diverting gossip" on the other; they are changes of which the community is politely unaware and which the child may experience with a confused mixture of glowing pride and shamed self-consciousness.

So it happens that one of our adolescent boys may be an "A plus" student in American history, a local champion on the tennis court, and a player of recognized powers of endurance on the football field; he may be using his razor with gratifying effectiveness, and his voice may have settled down to a stable basso profundo; yet, though he feels himself every inch a man, he must continue to attend "school," be economically dependent on his parents, and report to them on his activities, and he may be forbidden to smoke or remain out beyond a specified hour.

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, pp. 145-6.



## Adolescence

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Our adolescent girl may be well aware of her complete physical maturity, her new physical attractiveness, and her desire for a closer acquaintance with the opposite sex; yet she must continue to attend the same classes she attended before all these changes took place, "play with girls," go to bed at "bedtime," and, in general, be obedient to the wishes of her parents. If the boy and girl find this lack of recognition of their adulthood incongruous and begin frankly to assert their independence, they are said to be manifesting characteristic adolescent rebellion against authority. If, on the other hand, they submit outwardly but rebel within and become irritable, seclusive, sullen, and apparently at cross-purposes with themselves and their environment, they are said to be manifesting typical adolescent conflicts.

Our society has fixed no one definite time at which a boy or girl is to be designated as adult by the various ways in which custom, fashion, and family circumstances dictate, whether it be with regard to wearing high heels or long trousers, using cosmetics or having a car, entering society or smoking in public, or assuming the title of "Miss" or "Mr."

Similarly the law shows no uniformity in designating the age of adulthood. It determines a maximum age for required school attendance, a minimum age for entering industry, a maximum age for receiving public pensions as dependent minors, and a minimum age for culpability for unlawful conduct; it fixes the age of parental responsibility, the age at which a child may drive an automobile, and it sets a minimum age for making valid contracts, for marrying with or without parental consent, for inheriting property, and for voting. But even within the bound-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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aries of one state and one community these various ages do not coincide. Indeed, they often range over a period of more than ten years.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the recognition of adulthood which primitive man accords his child at puberty is withheld from our boys and girls through a long series of years during which they must constantly struggle to differentiate between those things which they are sufficiently grown up to do and those for which they must wait until they are "a little older." And many of the difficulties which we have come to think of as the difficulties inherent in this mysterious developmental process called adolescence are really difficulties characteristic of and created by our form of civilization.<sup>4</sup>

### WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS

In describing his early childhood,<sup>5</sup> E. F. Benson wrote, "The minds of children as they grow have the diseases incident to childhood much as their bodies have. I had had my measles of sentimentality, and having got over that I developed during this year a kind of whooping cough of lying." Mr. Benson is not a specialist in behavior problems, but his comparison is useful. For lying—and rebelliousness, home-sickness, whining, over-demonstrativeness, over-dependency, lack of respect for other people's property, pugnacity, poor school work, shyness, and all the other forms of undesirable behavior

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<sup>3</sup> This observation is made with a somewhat different point of view by Leta S. Hollingworth in *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, pp. 31-34.

<sup>4</sup> This is obviously an anthropological rather than a psychoanalytic point of view and should perhaps carry with it an acknowledgment and reference to Franz Boas' excellent introduction to Mead, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> E. F. Benson, *Our Family Affairs*, p. 83.

## Adolescence

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—should be thought of as possible afflictions to which even the normal child is subject.

It is true that there are certain intellectual and emotional defects as well as physical disabilities with which individuals are born, or which they have acquired through disease or injury, rendering them incapable in varying degrees of competing with whole and healthy individuals. The intellect, like the body, may be dwarfed; the ability to differentiate between desirable and undesirable forms of conduct, like the ability to walk, may be paralyzed by disease. Although little if anything can be done to "cure" these definitely abnormal individuals, and although we are slow in learning the causes and means of prevention of such abnormalities, we have gained much in our knowledge of what may be expected of these individuals; how they can be made most useful and most happy; and how their families can best be prevented from an unavailing sacrifice of their own happiness and social usefulness.

But there is another group of ills—both physical and mental—to which even normal individuals may be subject, and which may give the individual discomfort and pain or render him a menace to the healthy members of the community. Just as normal young boys and girls in good physical health may eat indiscreetly and have indigestion, so normal boys and girls in good mental health may have intellectual and emotional "indigestion." But indiscreet eating may become a habit and have a seriously damaging effect on a child's digestive system, and similarly, arrant selfishness may become a habit, having a deleterious effect on the child's personality.

There are both predisposing factors and ameliorating conditions to be considered in the treatment of mental or

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

personality problems, just as there are in the treatment of physical problems. There was a time when many physical ailments were treated with home remedies, but after many years we have learned to eliminate from among these "home remedies" at least a few of those based on tribal magic, witchcraft, religious superstitions, and quackery—remedies as potent to aggravate as to relieve a difficulty. In their place we have not only effective remedies but also that knowledge of underlying causes that enables us to prevent many of the pains, aches, and illnesses formerly regarded as inescapable afflictions. Among the home remedies for intellectual and emotional afflictions there may be found just as many prescriptions based on tribal magic, witchcraft, religious superstition, medical as well as psychological quackery; like the remedies for physical ills these remedies for "spiritual ills" have often been more effective in aggravating than in relieving a condition. It is only within recent years that we have come to understand enough about the underlying causes of undesirable behavior reactions to enable us to begin to treat and prevent them.

No attempt has been made to formulate a classification of the varied problems or of the normal reactions to the environmental situations here considered. It is obvious that generalizations cannot be made about conduct without danger. Nor can anything worth while be achieved by throwing individuals in groups or classifying them as types and treating them as such. All the varied factors which contribute to both an understanding of the individual and the environment which he has to meet must be considered with great care before stating whether his conduct has been carried out on a conscious or unconscious

## Adolescence

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level and whether it is explainable in terms of the individual or the environment. Stealing, for example, may be an end in itself or simply a means by which some particular objective or satisfaction is attained, bearing little or no relation to the desire for the object. Stealing may result from jealousy or a desire for revenge, or it may be but a part or an episode in the activities of gang life. Not infrequently that which is stolen is utilized as the price of admission for the opportunity to participate with a particular group. Any of these motives and any others that might be mentioned, are the real goals which the individual is striving to attain and the stealing is but a means to that end.

The same reasoning holds in our attempt to understand human behavior, whether it be found in the nursery, school, college, or camp. Regardless of whether the conduct be looked upon as good or bad—the real matter for concern is the motive which directs it, even though it may not be at all in evidence.

An attempt has been made to discuss some of the pitfalls and hazards that surround the adolescent and, in so far as possible, to suggest how they may be avoided; or, in those cases where the difficulties already exist, to indicate in a general way the approach most likely to be helpful in the solution of the problem. Only such suggestions are made as can be carried out with the facilities available to the great masses of parents and teachers who are confronted with these problems and are assuming the responsibility of education in its broadest sense.

The mental health, moral stamina, and total personal efficiency which the adolescent acquires during the process of growing up must necessarily, to a very large extent,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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be the result of his intimate relationship with those with whom he comes into contact in his everyday life, rather than with those especially trained in the field of human behavior. This makes it imperative that parents, teachers, and others sharing in the responsibility for the child's development, not only use all the knowledge they have but also feel it their duty to acquire such additional knowledge as is already available and well within their intellectual range, applying it with all the skill at their command.

There is, of course, information regarding behavior problems that lies outside the scope of acquisition or understanding of parents and teachers in general, and there are many problems so involved and complicated that only those who have special training and broad experience with behavior problems can hope to treat them successfully, and even those with the best training and broadest experience are frequently confronted with their own failures. Part of lay wisdom is the recognition of the layman's limitations. Fortunately, however, many of the problems of adolescence are created by environmental situations which may well be avoided, or at least be rendered less difficult to cope with if parents approach these matters objectively and benefit by the information at hand.

There are no specific psychological principles applicable to the adolescent period. There are, however, certain physiological factors and psychological situations that are not met elsewhere, or are met here for the first time, or are met more frequently here than at any other time during the individual's life journey.

The wisdom with which the individual has been trained,

## Adolescence

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the effect of his past experiences, the stabilizing force exerted by his purpose in life, as well as his intellectual ability and physical stamina, are all important considerations during this period when all of life seems to be dominated by the intensity of the individual's own feelings. Could parents and teachers but indulge themselves in a bit of introspection, letting their fantasies ramble about unguided and unhampered, one will venture to say that soon they will stumble onto some youthful indiscretion that would be shocking, indeed, if disclosed in one of their children. Some malicious lie, a sneaky trick, a thieving episode, some smutty story, a sex experience, a cowardly retreat, cheating, cruelty, and innumerable experiences which in themselves were not really bad or vicious but to which had been attached too much importance, resulting in undue anxiety. How much more things mattered in those days! Fortunate we are that the appetites of life are less demanding as the years advance, and that as we journey on we learn to assimilate the unhappy experiences, making them a part of the whole picture without allowing them to intrude and color our attitude toward life which is dependent on our more permanent satisfactions.

With the changing trends of time, new conditions and situations have been created with which the adolescent has to contend. The radical modifications brought about by modern methods and machinery have increased tremendously the leisure time at the disposal of young people. The necessity of preparing the adolescent of to-day to utilize this newly acquired freedom wisely is one of the outstanding problems of parent training and modern education. There is an ever increasing demand

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

for more knowledge of how to live, how to spend one's time pleasantly and profitably and how to avoid boredom and purposeless activity resulting from the inability to find peace, contentment, and satisfaction in those interests and activities which can be carried on by the individual himself.

The adolescent period is the period when the individual is given to experimenting with life. It must necessarily be so, for he is endeavoring to determine what life is all about, what he can get out of it, and what he must contribute. He begins to question things, and he becomes filled with honest doubt as to the real value of the customs and traditions of the family. His natural inclination is to venture forth on his own, and to determine for himself the strength and weakness of his own personality. He disagrees with those who are older and supposedly wiser as to what he should do, where he should go, and whom he should seek for friends and companions. He is argumentative about matters pertaining to religion, social customs, and politics. He is shockingly indifferent towards his elders, questioning the value of manners, and not infrequently failing to maintain the family standard with reference to morals.

Yet in all this emotional turmoil we find that the adolescent is invariably lacking in any firm, rigid convictions about anything excepting the fact that he is vigorously seeking the truth. Actually, he is in a most plastic stage, usually ready and anxious to get something in the way of a philosophy which will help him to guide and direct his social activities. In other words, he is resentful toward the management of the earlier years but still most excellent material for wise and skillful guidance from those



## Adolescence

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in whom his past experience has justified confidence. One finds that frequently this guidance must be delicately passive rather than forcefully active. It may mean nothing more or less than being ready and willing to administer to the bruise after he has stubbed his toe and suffered the natural consequences of his own indiscretion. All the pitfalls cannot be avoided, but the harmful effects of the fall may be reduced to a minimum by the wisdom with which the parent handles the situation, and that particular shoal may be avoided in the future.

Guiding and directing the development of the adolescent is an art, not a science. The guiding hand must be firm and forceful at times, yet ever ready to lend a lighter touch when the occasion demands, and each and every parent must be his own judge as to just what approach will best serve the future needs of the child. Mistakes are inevitable; they must be looked upon as evidences of the fact that we are human. Fortunately, youth is so endowed physically, intellectually, and emotionally that the occasional parental mistake does not leave too deep a scar. It is the general attitude of the parents and teachers, and the atmosphere of the home and school, on which youth is dependent for the essential equipment to make his future happy and successful.

## CHAPTER II

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### GENERAL PHYSICAL GROWTH

A SUDDEN, and perhaps surprising, increase in height and weight, and in the size of arms, legs, hands, feet, and any other part of the anatomy is characteristic during adolescence. Within one year, the child may gain twenty-five or thirty pounds in weight and four or five inches in height. This period of rapid growth usually occurs early in the teens, and somewhat earlier in girls than in boys.

Since each child's rate of growth tends to be regular throughout the growing-up period, this sudden increase rarely changes the nature of the child's physique. In other words, both the short child and the tall child grow noticeably during adolescence, the short child growing into a short adult, and the tall child into a tall adult. There are, of course, exceptions; a child who has had long and serious illness interfering with normal growth before adolescence, may, on recovery, suddenly make up for this during adolescence; and a child suffering from a glandular disturbance may have an abnormal rate of growth. For the average child, however, nothing but continuous increased growth should be expected.

Girls grow more slowly after fourteen years and usually stop growing entirely by the time they are twenty. Boys

## Physical Development

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may continue to grow until they are twenty-two or even twenty-three years of age, but their rate of growth is slower after the fifteenth or sixteenth year.

Strength also increases rapidly from the seventh year on, and more rapidly during the early teens. The fact that the child's strength increases more rapidly than his height, accounts for some of the adolescent's awkwardness and clumsiness in managing himself.

### MATURING OF THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

The most outstanding physiological development during adolescence is in the maturing of the reproductive organs. When these organs become capable of functioning as in the adult—when the ovaries begin to release the egg cells or ova essential to childbearing in the girl, and the testicles to release the sperm cells essential to fertilization on the part of the boy—puberty is said to have been reached.

It is not easy to know just when the reproductive organs begin to function. In the girl, ovulation, or the formation and discharge of egg cells, is closely connected with menstruation and so the girl is said to be "mature" when she has had her first menstrual flow or "monthly period." Although there is no similar process in the boy, the discharge of semen during sleep, known as a "nocturnal emission," is often considered evidence that maturity has been reached.

The age at which these signs of maturity occur varies considerably. In North America puberty is likely to occur between the ages of twelve and fifteen years in girls, and a year or two later in boys. But race, climate, living

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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conditions, and the child's own physical condition all play a part in the maturing process and make even further variations in age possible.

Accompanying and preceding puberty itself, noticeable physical changes take place in the child. There is a growth of hair in the arm pits and pubic regions, and further development of the genitals; the voice becomes fuller and, in the boy, is likely to "break" as it changes from a childish to a more masculine pitch; as the girl's breasts form and her hips broaden, her body begins to appear womanly, while the boy, with his broadening shoulders and the growth of hair on his face, begins to take on a more manly aspect.

### PHYSICAL HYGIENE

With all these changes taking place in the child's body, some thought must be given to his physical hygiene. Rapid growth is likely to cause either a tremendous increase in the child's appetite, or, particularly in the girl, a tendency to finickiness with loss of appetite at some times and strong, special cravings—as, for example, for particularly sweet or sour dishes—at other times. Attention must therefore be given not only to the child's diet but also to his eating habits. Sudden increase in the rate of growth is likely to cause fatigue, making long hours of sleep essential. Rapid growth of the larger muscles, gain in strength, and the possible awakening of a disturbing sex-consciousness make out-of-door exercise highly desirable. As all the increased body activities are likely to increase the body wastes, good habits of elimination, including freedom from constipation without the use of

## Physical Development

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drugs, and a healthy, active skin condition, are of primary importance.

All of these are, however, matters which parents may already take for granted. They may realize, for instance, that an abundance of milk, wholesome bread and cereals, and fresh fruits and vegetables, a minimum of rich pastries and sweets, and absence of tea and coffee constitute a wholesome diet for the young child; that regular meals and a minimum of eating between meals keeps the child's digestive system in good order; and that plenty of out-of-door play, regular toilet habits, and a clean body are essential to keeping him comfortable, healthy, and cheerful. They may therefore be disappointed to find that except for certain modifications—such as increase in the amounts of food, gradual decrease in the hours of sleep from eleven to ten and presently to nine, changes in the type of out-of-door activity, and perhaps greater conscientiousness about internal and external body cleanliness—there is nothing new to be done for the adolescent. For there are no special rules for the hygiene of the adolescent. Puberty is, after all, but the continuation of a development which began before birth, and for which the normal human being is as well equipped as he is for any other natural physical change. The parent who has helped his child establish good habits of eating, sleeping, elimination, cleanliness, posture, and exercise in early childhood, needs only to see that these are continued and to impress upon the adolescent the importance of observing the fundamental principles of physical hygiene in order to maintain a healthy and efficient body during this or any other period of his life.

Just as training in the habits of physical hygiene for

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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adolescence should be a continuation of the training in early childhood, so instruction in the nature and function of the reproductive organs should be a continuation of earlier sex instruction. In other words, the parent should not think of adolescence as the time for their one campaign.

In the *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*, parents were advised to give "clear, frank answers suited to the child's intelligence and development" on all questions of sex. When this practice is followed, it may well happen that by the time a child reaches adolescence, particularly if he is brought up intimately with older children, he has asked for all the information he needs. But if he has not, the parents should by no means feel obliged to wait for the child's questions especially when they see that rapid development is taking place. They can easily notice the body changes already described and remind or point out to the child that these are signs that he is passing from childhood to adulthood.

The father can, perhaps, discuss these matters most helpfully with the boy. He should prepare him to expect an occasional discharge of semen, likely to occur during sleep, explaining that this is nature's way of taking care of his sex activity until he should be physically, economically, and socially ready to assume the responsibility of mating, and assuring him that these "nocturnal emissions," as well as the involuntary "erections" he may experience either in sleep or in sexually exciting situations, are perfectly natural occurrences about which he should feel no alarm. He should also advise the boy that he is less likely to be disturbed by these experiences if he leads a vigorous life, finding pleasure and perhaps a certain

## Physical Development

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pride in hard work and play, cool and regular sleep, cold baths, and wholesome interests.

Similarly the mother should prepare the girl for the occurrence of menstruation, explaining its purpose in relation to childbearing, advising her how to take care of herself during her "monthly periods," and helping her to establish a wholesome attitude toward this additional body function. The old attitude that the menstruating girl was "sick" or "unwell," that she could not bathe, that she must never get wet feet, that she must not eat certain foods, and that all her activities should be modified even to the extent of spending some time in bed, is scorned by the modern girl who goes to coeducational schools and lets nothing interfere with the interests and activities she shares with boys, and is necessarily scorned by the girl who enters industry or business and is obliged to ignore all minor ills and discomforts. But neither of these attitudes can be wholeheartedly recommended or wholeheartedly condemned. Physical build, the position and stage of development of the reproductive organs, the functioning of the glands of internal secretion, and the general physical condition of individual girls vary so greatly that although one girl may safely indulge in swimming during her menstrual period, another may be actually obliged to spend some time in bed. Although the effects of menstruation on physical and mental activities have been studied by numerous investigators, these studies have usually been made on women and girls in whom the function was already well established, and their findings would not necessarily apply to the maturing girl who is not yet fully grown, and whose periods may still be somewhat irregular.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

For these reasons, parents can be advised only in a general way, first, to regard menstruation as a normal process, neither looking upon the girl as "sick" nor allowing her to consider herself so; secondly, to encourage the girl to continue her usual activities in the usual manner, warning, however, against overexertion and undue exposure; and thirdly, if the girl seems to be experiencing unusual discomfort or pain, to refer her to a physician for an examination with a view to correcting the causes of such conditions, and for advice as to the hygiene in her particular case.

The importance of considering individual difficulties in the light of physical condition as well as mental attitude may be seen in the case of Gertrude.

*Gertrude A.*, a young college student, had come to the attention of both the head of her dormitory, and the student physician because of her "weak physical condition." She felt obliged to spend at least one day in bed every month and as this custom continued, it occurred to her advisors that possibly she had some mental conflict over her menstruation, or that she was using this semi-invalidism as a means of gaining attention and sympathy. This explanation seemed the more tenable as it was known that Gertrude had lived an unusually restricted home life and had always suffered by comparison with an older sister whose physical well-being, social poise, and success in all activities had been held up to her as a goal.

As her excuse for being unable to keep step with her sister, Gertrude had always said that she simply did not feel sufficiently strong and "peppy." Her sister, to whom she was quite devoted, had occasionally grown impatient with her and told her that her physical inadequacies



## Physical Development

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were all in her "state of mind," and that she should "snap out of it." Influenced by her sister's attitude and morbidly affected by the fact that her father had died of brain tumor, Gertrude had begun to think that her mind was in some way affected, and before going to college she had arranged for treatment by a psychiatrist. She continued to feel, however, that her problems had not all been solved, and was therefore willing to see both physician and psychiatrist.

Careful examination showed that this student was suffering from a very definite physical disorder and that her menstrual difficulty as well as her general physical weakness were due to a glandular disturbance for which she needed a long course of treatment with careful supervision of her hours of sleep, her diet, and her activities. This necessitated her withdrawal from college for the remainder of the year.

Both the boy and the girl should be told not only about the organs and processes of reproduction in their own sex, but also in the other sex. Above all, they should be made to feel free to ask any questions or consult their parents about any feelings or experiences which they find puzzling or disturbing.

Parents who feel that they do not know enough about these matters to explain them to their children may find it well to discuss them first with each other, and with their family physician. They may also get help from various books describing the physiology of reproduction and suggesting ways in which parents can explain this to their children. If for some reason they still feel unable to tackle the subject, they should arrange to have the family

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

physician have a conference with the child, or recommend something to be read by the child himself. Although they will probably, by this method, lose the rather precious experiences that come to the parent who is on an intimate, confidential level with his child, they will at least not fail the child as they would by neglecting this matter entirely.

Some parents are inclined to feel that the importance of sex instruction—and, indeed, of all aspects of child care and guidance—is greatly exaggerated. They believe that they, and many of their friends, grew up to be competent men and women without any so-called habit training and parental sex instruction. But even if they can recall no anxieties, doubts, shocks, or unhappy experiences which they might have been spared with wise guidance, they should be able to see that the very changes which they and their generation have made in the world are creating the need for changed methods of bringing up the next generation.

As civilization speeds up, there is an increase not only in life's conveniences, comforts, and pleasures, but also in its hazards and dangers. Automobiles, for example, contribute greatly to man's convenience, comfort and pleasure, but they also greatly increase the rate of accidents causing disability and death; moving pictures add to our sources of amusement, but they may also give the growing child premature and undesirable ideas concerning the relations between men and women. This does not mean that all automobiles and all moving pictures should be condemned. It does mean, however, that parents who are interested in their children will teach them to cross the streets carefully as soon as they begin to go out alone; and, in the same spirit, as soon as the children

## Physical Development

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are likely to come in contact with sex attitudes, either through moving pictures, books, companions, or other forms of observation and experience, they will want to help them get a safe and healthy outlook on sex.

### BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The number of adolescents coming to the psychiatrist for help with behavior problems associated with physical development is small, for when minor problems do arise parents usually regard them as of a passing nature, and rightly so. But because all of them may cause the adolescent a certain amount of unnecessary unhappiness for the time being and some of them, if neglected, may lead to more serious problems later, they should at least be mentioned in passing.

### PROBLEMS OF PHYSICAL GROWTH

There is no doubt that the process of physical growth itself may be responsible for a certain number of problems concerned with adolescence. Some children develop physically with such intensity and rapidity that their physical structure is carried away beyond what the nervous system is able to sustain without evidence of too much strain. The symptoms may be entirely of a physical nature, as, *e.g.*, poor coördination, stammering, tics, or general bodily fatigue; or they may be mental reactions superimposed upon or independent of the physical symptoms, as self-consciousness, feelings of inferiority, hyperactivity, or perhaps the much abused term "lazi-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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ness"; or they may manifest themselves on the intellectual side of the individual's life, slowing up his intellectual processes to the extent of making him appear dull.

*Jim* was a big, ungainly, poorly coördinated, fifteen-year-old boy in a large preparatory school. His extremities showed marked over-development so that arms and hands seemed to be dangling away in space. He bore a sullen expression as though he had a grudge against the world, and well he might, for he was out of harmony with his fellow schoolmates as well as with the masters. He was resented in the activities of the other boys. On one occasion one of the boys in the dormitory had referred to him as "the great big dumb-looking guy on the next floor." Another boy had said, "He looks and dresses funny," and another, "He always says and does the wrong thing and tries to get inside the lines when he is not wanted."

His masters reported that he had "a defiant, rebellious attitude toward criticism"; that he was "the laziest man in school"; that he "made no effort"; and that he "lacked every spark of ambition."

One master, however, looking a little beyond what appeared on the surface, reported, "Sullenness only apparent. Overgrowth lies at the root of his troubles. Is probably unhappy." And therein lay the answer to this boy's perfectly miserable existence for a period of two years. He was so self-conscious about his ungainly appearance and general over-development that he thought everybody was against him and he conducted himself as if every boy and master were his enemy.

Having a good intelligence as indicated by his intelligence quotient of 123, he was humiliated by his failure

## Physical Development

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in class work—a failure which was due to emotional turmoil rather than to indifference or inferior intelligence. It was his attitude toward his overgrowth rather than the overgrowth itself that was his real handicap.

While this is an extreme and somewhat unusual case, clumsiness, awkwardness, inability to manage rapidly growing feet, and self-consciousness over hands which seem suddenly to thrust themselves out of their sleeves, are common enough. They are not necessarily due to overgrowth, but are merely accompaniments of entirely normal development.

Growth is often so rapid that it takes the child a little time to get accustomed to his increased size, and as parts of his body grow more rapidly than others, he may have difficulty coördinating his movements; moreover, as increase in strength is not only relatively greater than increase in size, but also continues over a longer period of time, the child can learn only by experience to gauge the amount of effort required to move himself or various objects about.

*Jerry's* growth was a sore trial to him. He became very awkward in appearance as well as in his actions. His growth began in his hands and feet which seemed quite enormous and, to his embarrassment, kept getting in everybody's way. Then suddenly he appeared to be stretching upward, growing very tall and developing good, broad shoulders, but looking thin and out of proportion. During this stage his nose and chin were still the nose and chin of a little boy, and his cheeks still downy and pink, and he was very self-conscious, constantly expressing disgust over his "silly" appearance and his "baby face."

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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Presently, his chest began to fill out and his face to look "grown-up," and just when his worries over his appearance were nearing an end, his increasing strength began to distress him. Each time he rose from the dining-room table, there was a clatter of dishes, and a threat of disaster. Each time he leaned back in a chair, there were creaks and groans. He complained feelingly that the furniture, which might do very well for his sisters, was not strong enough for him, and it was clear to his harassed family that his strength was almost as great a trial as his "silly" appearance had been.

One evening while he was reading in his father's study the telephone rang. He reached for the receiver, and knocked the instrument to the floor with a crash. His father winced but said nothing. Jerry finished his telephone conversation and awkwardly banged the instrument down on the desk, shoving it once more to the floor. His father jumped to his feet with an expression of impatience and stalked from the room, and Jerry, ashamed and humiliated, slunk off to bed.

This picture of a perfectly normal adolescent and a homely, everyday situation is almost too common to be looked upon as a problem. But it does illustrate one of the ways in which adolescence contributes to the wear and tear on the parental nervous system, and also one of the ways in which the adolescent may come to regard his parent as unsympathetic and lacking in understanding or himself as a clumsy boor. Jerry happened to have a very buoyant personality and, on the strength of his two or three extra hours of sleep he went forth to the tennis court the next day to work on some "smashing serves."

## Physical Development

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Here his strength was a source of sufficient joy to make him forget the humiliation it had brought upon him the previous evening. But a child inclined to be introspective and hypersensitive may well grieve over such an incident for several days, and may need some help in seeing it in its proper perspective.

Life is full of these little episodes which seem too common and too unimportant to deserve attention but which undoubtedly are the source of far greater annoyance, irritability, discomfort, and unhappiness, than many clearly recognized problems. An understanding of them may go far to make family life more harmonious in general and more helpful to each member. So with this phase of adolescence parents do well to remember that a child is likely to go through a period of clumsiness and awkwardness which they can make less annoying to themselves and less trying for him by understanding and helping him to understand the reason for it, and by being patient.

### POOR POSTURE

The importance of good posture habits in maintaining the various organs of the body in their proper position and in enabling them to work to the best advantage has been so much stressed by physicians in recent years that posture charts, posture exercises, and posture clinics have been made available for great numbers of children. Posture training, is, however, something which should be begun in early childhood under the supervision of some one familiar with the anatomy and mechanics of the human body, and no attempt will be made to outline its principles here. The subject is being called to the atten-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

tion of parents in this connection for two reasons only: First, that rapidly growing bodies may have difficulty in learning how to carry themselves, or may feel tired and inclined to slump, making special attention to posture advisable at this time; and secondly, that the self-consciousness accompanying rapid growth leads some adolescents, particularly girls, to assume unhealthy postures in an attempt to look small or less ungainly.

In the first instance, the child may need more rest, other forms of exercise and possibly the advice of the physician and the use of braces, but in the second, a change of attitude is essential. The latter is illustrated by the experience of Sue.

*Sue*, a thin, small-boned girl, had just entered high school, when she became alarmed to find herself suddenly bursting out of all her clothes. She seemed to grow in every direction but she was most concerned over the rapid development of curves which gave her figure a very mature, womanly look, for she was growing up in the period when the boyish silhouette was fashionable and curves had to be concealed. For fear of being teased by her brothers and being conspicuous among her more flat-chested classmates, she got into the habit of hunching her shoulders down, carrying herself with a slight stoop, and slouching in her walk.

In the course of Sue's further growing up two important things happened: First, she went to work in a woman's dress shop where her good figure was quickly appreciated and she was taught to dress well; and second, the boyish silhouette went out of style and her brothers, now more mature, made up for their early jibes by a frank admiration of her "stunning" appearance.



## Physical Development

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No matter how much fashions change there will probably always be a minority of individuals suffering from a consciousness of deviating from the mode and there will probably always be a number of adolescent girls suffering from an unhappy conviction that their figures are "unbearable," and endeavoring to do what they can to conceal the fact.

Parents can do much to ease these situations. They can help a girl to overcome much of her self-consciousness by teaching her to dress in a style that is becoming to her, with such modifications of the prevailing fashion as her immediate assets and liabilities require. Often when a mother is herself unable to give such help she can procure it from an able saleswoman, dressmaker, or a friend with what is known as a natural flair for clothes. If mothers only realized how greatly a little effort of this kind would affect the future as well as immediate happiness of the daughter, they would undoubtedly find some means of giving this help. Both parents can aid a daughter further during such a period by tempering some of the inevitable cruelties of brothers and sisters and by helping the girl to see her good points and gain enough self-confidence not only to take brotherly criticism good-naturedly but also to make the most of herself as she is.

Poor posture habits, whatever their cause, and regardless of whether they appear in boys or girls, are far more easily prevented than corrected.

### DISORDERS OF THE SKIN

Disorders of the skin are among the most common and most trying experiences during the early years of ado-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

lescence. The small ducts through which oil is carried to the skin apparently do not grow fast enough to take care of the increased activity of the glands supplying this secretion, and, as a result, they become stopped up. As the glands continue to function even though drainage is blocked, the ducts become over-filled and unsightly blemishes begin to appear on the surface of the skin.

In addition to the danger of continued infection and scarring, there is the danger that the sensitive adolescent may develop an exaggerated self-consciousness over the disfigured complexion, and begin to have feelings of inferiority. This is well illustrated in the problems of Jean.

*Jean* had been a nervous, irritable, critical youngster, dissatisfied with life both at home and at school. Through the efforts of her mother, who had all possible physical sources of irritability attended to, and her teachers who tried to make her conscious of her responsibility to others and her ability to create her own happiness, she began slowly to improve. By the time she was fifteen her teachers were able to report that she was gaining in self-control, adapting herself more courteously to those about her, and that, in general, she seemed to be having a good time.

In the midst of this improvement her complexion began to trouble her. Her skin was fair but very oily, and a summer of over-indulgence in ice cream sodas and similar refreshments began to show its effects. She developed a condition of acne sufficiently trying to any adolescent, but particularly trying to a girl just learning to get along with people. Jean was, in fact, quite overwhelmed by her affliction. She lost much of her newly-gained self-confidence, became introspective, and allowed her whole outlook on life to be darkened. She had just begun to make

## Physical Development

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friends with boys and to enjoy their companionship, but her feeling of inferiority became so intense that these relationships were no longer a source of pleasure to her; on the contrary, they contributed further to her unhappiness.

It is unfortunate that just at the time when the skin is perhaps in need of a little added care, the growing child is most tempted by chocolates, candy bars, cookies, ice cream sundaes, and soda fountain drinks, and possibly most careless about keeping the digestive system in healthy order. Skin specialists have found that proper attention to the fundamental principles of physical hygiene already referred to, will keep most young complexions in good condition. When the skin fails to respond well to this routine, more vigorous local attention may be necessary and the advice of a physician desirable.

As evidence that these problems are not limited to a mere cosmetic interest in girls, the case of Lester might be cited.

All during his seventeenth and eighteenth years, *Lester* was subject to severe infection. His neck and face would be covered with deep, small feruncles or "boils" and for the time being he would have to give up whatever activities and expeditions he had planned.

The effect of these boils in making him unhappy over his physical appearance was, however, an aggravation rather than a cause of his self-consciousness. Lester had been shy, self-conscious, and socially ill at ease from early childhood. His mother had died when he was eight, and he had been left defenseless against his older brothers who, like many other lusty, growing boys, had found pleasure in teasing their "baby brother." He had always

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

been somewhat "below par" physically and this had tended to make him succumb to the teasing rather than to fight back. The servants in the home had found him rather tiresome and had not been inclined to be patient with him. Even after he had gone away to school, and had taken an active and respectable part in sports in an effort to "pull himself out of his troubles" and be a "good fellow," he had been subject to considerable teasing because he had appeared less mature and less virile than most of the lads his age.

Lester was a very decent sort of chap without being in the least a "sissy." He did not smoke or drink and had no bad sex habits, but this general cleanness and decency was one of the favorite points of attack among the boys who were sufficiently rude to tease him about his skin trouble.

In talking over his difficulties with the doctor, Lester remarked that he thought his boils had had one advantage, namely, that by incapacitating him for various activities they had indirectly led him to spend more time in reading. Fortunately this reading had had a beneficial effect on him. He had become less introspective and unhappy, and had gained courage and confidence from reading of the struggles and hardships that were a part of the careers of some of the characters he most admired.

Normal growth and development may be interrupted or modified by illness or accidents and it is extremely important that parents recognize the importance of not over-emphasizing any residuals that may result from these experiences. All too frequently it is found that during a prolonged illness of any kind the patient's attitude

## Physical Development

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gets turned upon himself and he gets a distorted view of his relationship to other people. This is obviously due to the fact that his illness has called for much sympathy, attention, and solicitude on the part of parents and friends. He holds the center of the stage for the time being and as the normal processes of recovery go on he may be reluctant to relinquish his position of interest in the family group. If it be that he has been left with some after-effects of his illness, he may have a tendency to build his life around the incapacity rather than around his capacities. Thus interruption in physical development may retard emotional development and give rise to evidences of immaturity, and general poor health may affect the individual's entire outlook on life.

The extent to which the adolescent's mental attitude toward his physical condition may affect his general personality development is illustrated in the following case.

*Everett* measured somewhat above the average child in intellectual equipment, but somewhat below in general physical condition. His parents were naturally concerned over his health and did everything in their power to improve his physical well-being. In their interest in having his tonsils, adenoids, and appendix removed, in having him treated for thyroid trouble, and in struggling to improve his health, they did not realize, however, that they were helping him to build his entire life around his illnesses, his symptoms, and his reactions to treatment.

During the few years which *Everett* actually spent in school, he accomplished but little, as he was continually nursing his health. Much of the time he was out of school entirely and although he received some tutoring when he felt sufficiently well to study, this arrangement gave him

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

but little experience competing with other children either in scholastic work or in athletics or in normal social interplay.

At the age of fourteen, Everett entered a college preparatory school. His dormitory master reported that he was "slow in his adjustment to his surroundings." He did not seem to know how to get on with boys of his own age and size. He was still much interested in his various operations which he enjoyed discussing in considerable detail.

Undesirable mental attitudes toward physical conditions are common causes of maladjustment in all walks of life. They are not easy to overcome, for physical ailments and symptoms of illness are essentially personal and may be very dear to their possessor who will cherish them in inverse proportion to the amount of satisfaction he is deriving through normal channels.

The following cases of Ruth and Mildred are instructive in showing that hypochondriacal attitudes do not necessarily have their origin in parental over-solicitude, but may develop within the adolescent himself to serve some purpose of his own.

*Ruth* brought with her to college an attitude of undue concern toward her own health. She showed a great interest in illness, pain, and death, and she discussed these subjects whenever the opportunity arose.

A discussion of her childhood and her family relationships seemed to leave no doubt but what this undue concern about herself and her fear of illness and death were but attention-getting devices which she had practiced for many years. Having had a younger sister who had a

## Physical Development

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chronic physical illness, Ruth had found this method effective in securing the family's attention, and she had continued to use it both as a subject for discussion among the students, and as a personal problem at the infirmary. It need hardly be mentioned that this girl was having great difficulty in making a place for herself with the other students.

It took several months of reëducation before she developed adequate substitutes for her self-concern, but she succeeded eventually as was shown by the fact that she made many friends and graduated with honors.

*Mildred* had been subjected at the age of fourteen to a rather interesting, but not serious, operation upon her knee. She had received a good deal of attention at the hospital where she had been the year before for another operation. Over these two operations she had become self-centered and much given to contemplating her physical symptoms. Whenever she found herself in a difficult situation, she would get out of it by referring to the incapacity sustained from her operations and the pain she was still having in her knee.

Although careful examinations, including X-rays, showed no reason to believe that her knee was anything but normal, all attempts to help build her life around the healthy part of her body were resented and she clung tenaciously to her symptoms all during her college course, resenting any effort to help her meet her organic difficulty more efficiently.

It is of greatest importance that the adolescent should learn to look upon bodily health as one of the most precious assets in life, to appreciate that a sound physique

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

is the greatest protection against disease, and to recognize the part which bodily health plays in the attainment of happiness and success. His attention should not be focused upon the dangers of illness to the point of making him self-centered and hypochondriacal; nor should he lose sight of the fact that after all is said and done, almost everybody has some cross to bear in the way of a minor physical ailment. Human beings should, however, be discouraged from building their lives around their handicaps, and should be aided in preserving and improving such strength and health as they have.



## CHAPTER III

### ADJUSTMENT TO MATURING SEX DRIVES

SEX is a perennial subject of conversation, not only among men and women whose professional duties and interests require their consideration of this aspect of human behavior, but also among men and women—and boys and girls—who find sex an unfailing topic for fruitful discussion at home, in school, at their club, in the dormitory, or wherever else they meet for informal social chats. This is true not only because people are seeking information and endeavoring to find out what others feel and think about a subject that was so long tabooed from “polite conversation,” but also because they derive an unconscious satisfaction from doing a thing which still appears to be a bit daring. Even nice people no longer consider it necessary to avoid this subject in their more general conversations. That this frank, honest, and intelligent attitude toward such a fundamental factor in life has been reached augurs well for the happiness and security of the present and future generations of adolescents.

The old doctrines which taught that fear and ignorance were the only forces by which sex activity could be safely and securely held in submission are now generally recognized as fallacious. Like all false doctrines, they were charged with precepts that were not only unintelligent and impractical, but misleading and dangerous. Such men as Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud, whose fearless

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

approach to the subject of sex has been of far greater value than any one specific contribution they have made, dared to strip the subject of the emotional mystery and fear with which religion and social tradition had surrounded it, and to bring human sex activities out for objective and scientific consideration into the cold light of day. But increasing evidence of the fact that many of the mental conflicts leading to abnormalities of behavior had their origin in attitudes and experiences related to the individual's sex life made the subject of sex of such conspicuous importance that the old doctrines were not only discarded but replaced by theories running to a dangerous opposite extreme. It was not enough that the social attitude should swing from fear, secrecy, abstinence, and falsehood to truth, education, intelligence, and temperance. Once the pendulum had been set in motion, it must needs complete its arc and swing on to liberty, license, and indulgence.

The revolutionary nature of this change in attitude is to some extent illustrated in regard to the practice of masturbation.

The difference between the nineteenth and twentieth century attitudes on the problem of masturbation seems to be chiefly this: In the nineteenth century writers prided themselves on their courage in daring to mention so appalling a vice, while in the twentieth century writers pride themselves on their courage in daring to defend and even advocate the practice of this "vice."

Thus in 1842 it was said of a courageous lady that she "ventured to treat some matters, on which many have thought it most prudent to be silent; but while we have been keeping silence, the evil has been growing; and we

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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know no reason in the world why we should not struggle to save the community from the deplorable effects of pollution, especially self-pollution, which extends far, and is practiced by those whose moral principles would recoil with horror from what Mrs. Gove [the 'courageous lady'] calls *social* licentiousness. Masturbation does more than any other cause, perhaps than all other causes combined, to people our lunatic asylums; and sincerely do we thank Mrs. Gove for daring, in our falsely delicate society, to raise her warning voice, which she has done, and in tones which can offend nobody."<sup>1</sup>

In 1930, in a more scientific vein, two women write, "Recent investigations, particularly those of Katherine B. Davis, indicate that the practice of masturbation is far more common among women than was formerly supposed, perhaps reaching as high as sixty per cent. Popular opinion seems to consider this habit something to be greatly feared, and it is still spoken of as liable to cause insanity, feeble-mindedness, sterility and many other serious consequences. . . . We can be sure, however, that the mistaken attitudes about the effects of masturbation are far more likely to produce injurious results than the habit itself. The physical side of masturbation is probably non-injurious, unless the practice is extremely excessive; actually, it may even serve a decidedly useful purpose in relieving sex tension."<sup>2</sup>

According to nineteenth century writers masturbation "is equally opposed to moral purity and mental vigor. It keeps up the influence of unhallowed desires; it gives the

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin Cutter, *The Female Guide*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Phyllis Blanchard and Carlyn Manasses, *New Girls for Old*, pp. 33-4.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

passions an ascendancy in the character, fills the mind with lewd and corrupt images, and transforms its victim to a filthy and disgusting reptile.”<sup>3</sup>

To-day it is commonly regarded as “imperative that the adolescent who has come into contact with the notion that masturbation is in itself injurious to body or mind be completely reassured on this point.”<sup>4</sup>

A physician who has made a consistent effort to reassure not only adolescents but also adults in regard to masturbation, writes, “As regards normal people of either sex, . . . it is sometimes necessary and never does harm unless carried to great excess” and, after pointing out that “excess” and moderation vary with individual temperament and development, he continues by saying that when repression reproduces symptoms of severe discomfort, sex demands “might be gratified with perfect propriety, autoerotically.”<sup>5</sup>

There are many men and women of wisdom who find some of the ultra-modern views toward masturbation, as well as other forms of sex activity, a trifle indigestible. The implication of some modern writers seems to be that as soon as the individual is given a proper appreciation (or better depreciation), of the physical and moral consequences of the various sex practices, his conflicts are solved. This implication contains a theory that is not, however, borne out in practice, and therapy based upon this assumption would in many cases be barren of satisfactory results. For mental conflicts over masturbation, sexual promiscuity, and sex perversions are not founded entirely

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<sup>3</sup> Cutter, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2.

<sup>4</sup> Blanchard and Manasses, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> W. F. Robie, M.D., *Rational Sex Ethics*, Vol. II, pp. 256-7.

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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on the element of social disapproval; they arise also through the physical dissatisfaction, emotional frustration, and æsthetic displeasure which only too often accompany these experiences within the individual himself.

Men and women who are closely associated with young people, and who are in the position of advising them about the various problems of human adjustment, are quite aware that all the conflicts of life are not brought about by disharmony between the individual and public opinion. Some of the conflicts that are most deep-seated psychologically, most disintegrating to the individual, and most difficult to heal, are those between the conduct of the individual and his own ideas and ideals—conflicts that are quite independent of outside approval or disapproval.

For example, a boy who was having considerable conflict over his problem of masturbation, was ill advised by his physician to "go out and get a woman." Despite the physician's approval, this lad had such strong conflicts within himself over the sordidness of such an episode, that he was unable to carry through the doctor's recommendations. As a result, in addition to having a conflict over his masturbation, he now entertained the idea that this practice had rendered him impotent. This physician had failed entirely to consider the moral and æsthetic sensibilities of his patient, and, instead of helping him to solve one conflict, he subjected him to another, with the result that the boy experienced a severe and incapacitating depression which lasted for months and well might have terminated in suicide.

These emotional struggles are often so little affected by the opinions of others, and by the individual's own intellectual appreciation of the facts as they exist, that even

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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modern methods of psychotherapy are unable to affect the individual's "feeling tone" in regard to them.

Whatever virtue there was in the strictly moral approach to the regulation of one's sex life (regardless of whether it was on an autoerotic, homosexual or heterosexual level) has been disrupted in a large measure by the fact that social approval may be obtained on a fairly large scale for anything one wishes to practice. Within the radius of a few city blocks one may find several orthodox churches of various creeds, a homosexual colony, a children's aid society, an apartment house given over largely to prostitution, a city jail, the headquarters for the control of social diseases, a Y.M.C.A., and a maternity home for unmarried mothers; and, by merely walking a few more blocks in any direction, one may easily find a much wider selection of places where diametrically opposed activities are carried on in wholesale fashion.

There never was a time when society presented less in the way of solid dogmatic precepts for the adolescent to follow than the present. Never has society been so indulgent toward the delinquent: Sympathy has been spent to the extent of actually slopping over in maudlin sentimentality for the offender, while in some respects there has been an almost utter disregard for the offended. On the stage, on the screen, and on the printed page, the exponent of thievery, prostitution, get-rich-quick schemes and downright crookedness receives the sympathy and the applause. This more tolerant state of mind on the part of the general public has undoubtedly had some advantages and yielded certain social benefits. It has witnessed, for example, the creation of a system of juvenile courts, the provision of adequate and

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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humane treatment of unmarried mothers and their children, the organization and operation of clinics for venereal disease, and constructive programs tending toward correction rather than punishment in the field of criminology. On the other hand, a tolerance that leads to making heroes out of gunmen, applauding youth's rebellion against law and order, and putting a premium on a rather specious form of liberty and independence, can only have an undesirable effect on the great mass of American children who are being impressed by this present-day attitude toward acts which violate the rights of others.

The question now may be asked, of what value is the foregoing discussion to the parent who is endeavoring to be helpful to his adolescent boy or girl in his struggle to attain a healthy outlook on life in general and sex in particular?

If parents and teachers and all those concerned with the adolescent and his problems are to be helpful, it is necessary that they be frank in dealing with themselves as well as with him. However difficult it may be to discard the old hypocritical, self-satisfied moral code with its false promise of security, it must be done, or human beings will continue to wallow about in confusion and misunderstanding, and yell from the house tops that the world is going to the dogs. In leaving the old doctrines behind, this generation has with frankness and courage shattered some of the old traditions whose chief value lay in the fact that they made it easy for unintelligent, emotionally warped adults to dominate youth simply by the prestige of their age. Passively reclining, and endowing themselves with virtues which they

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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did not possess, such adults demanded respect to which their achievements did not entitle them. Fearful of anything new or strange, they resented and battled any change in the existing order of things; change might disturb that sense of security which was so essential to their peace of mind.

Adults of this group were invariably right in any controversy with youth. Parents were never wrong; there was no room for argument. The only limitation they ever admitted to their wisdom was that they "couldn't understand why young people acted so." It was the tradition of that part of the older generation who successfully dominated the home, church and school that has been shattered by the youth of to-day, and all who are interested in truth, honesty and frankness should feel deeply indebted to them for so doing.

But now, when adults are as eager as adolescents to abandon whatever is false, unsound, and pernicious, and are casting about for some means of arriving at a sexual morality which will lead to their own personal happiness, be socially valid, and help them to guide their children to an appreciation of the potential goodness of sex, what advice can be offered them?

First, foremost, and at all times parents should refrain from presenting sex as a problem which must necessarily be met and battled with either to victory or to defeat. Let them rather introduce it as one of the many normal aspects of life, having an early beginning and a gradual development similar to physical growth, intellectual maturation and emotional stabilization. To be sure, there will be exacerbations of sex awareness just as there will be growing pains or mental states of doubt



## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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and misgiving about the worthwhileness of life, but these are invariably temporary, and the adolescent need not be impressed with the idea that his adolescent years must be spent battling these cravings for sex experience. In the general training and education of the child, parents should see that their boys and girls are adequately supplied with interests and opportunities which will quite naturally be utilized by youth and serve as chances of escape for what would otherwise be expressed in terms of sex repression.

Sex sublimation, the term used by psychologists to indicate the conversion of sex energy into activity not ostensibly sexual, is available to everybody whether through living an out-of-door life with exercise and sports, through games and dancing, or through cultivating æsthetic interests and artistic talents and becoming absorbed in intellectual pursuits preferably to the point of creative effort.

With regard to these activities Dr. Blanchard suggests that "It does not matter so much about the quality of the work as that it provides an absorbing interest into which sex energy may be drained. For parents or teacher to discourage interests merely because they do not point to any vocational aptitude is exceedingly unwise."<sup>6</sup>

It should not be forgotten that work itself is one of the healthiest and most satisfying means of sex sublimation. It is a common observation that those who have some dominating intellectual interest combined with normal, healthy, physical activities have less difficulty in their sex adjustments than do those who lead an idle and inactive life without occupation or interest to de-

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<sup>6</sup> Ernest R. Groves and Phyllis M. Blanchard, *Introduction to Mental Hygiene*, pp. 142-3.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

mand their attention. To this latter group belong those self-centered and restless individuals who are so preoccupied with their own sensations and emotions that it is but natural for them to become unduly concerned with sex.

Physical exercise itself, whether it be in the form of work or play, is a direct outlet for energy and tension which bothers the indolent adolescent. It is therefore wise in making a plan for daily routine in the summer vacation, or the selection of a vocation, to consider the dominance of the sex urge of the individual concerned. There are altogether too many healthy, vigorous adolescents, loafing about country clubs, pool rooms, drawing-rooms, and other places of rendezvous when they should be busily occupied with a job which demands both mental and physical activity.

Sex becomes a real problem only when it is a symptom of poor adjustment of the total individual to his "total situation" in life. Dr. Blanchard would stress in particular the relation between child and parent in this "total situation," for she writes, "The proper control of the sex impulses is not decided entirely upon the basis of education. To a large extent the sex behavior of the adolescent boy or girl is determined by the whole emotional adjustment. If their contacts with parents and friends are satisfactory in other ways, it is more than likely that they will be able to meet the problems of sex adequately in spite of incorrect or meager information, and even in the face of unfortunate childhood conditionings. It is the emotionally starved boy or girl who plunges into adolescent experimentation with sex. The girl who feels that she is not wanted or not loved at home, whose parents

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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are faultfinding and critical, turns to friendships with boys for the petting and admiration which she craves. Through sex alliances, she tries to find the security of affection that she lacks in her relations with her parents. . . . In every case which comes to the attention of a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker because of maladjustment in the field of sex, unsatisfactory parent-child relationships are to be found as a fundamental factor."<sup>7</sup>

The child who is in intimate contact with life, is happy in his social relations, is adequately equipped physically, emotionally and intellectually to meet life on the particular level which his years require, may occasionally indulge in some so-called undesirable sex practice but it need cause parents little concern. It is when sex activity is utilized as "an ever-present source of comfort in time of trouble," that parents have real occasion for being alarmed.

Those adults who are directly responsible for the training and supervision of young people, are likely, however, to be seeking help not only in arriving at a general approach to the subject of sex, but also in meeting some of the specific problems with which their adolescents may be confronting them. They want to know, for example, whether an adolescent's preoccupation with erotic literature is vicious or harmless; whether the telling of "smutty" stories should be ignored or punished; whether petting must be condoned or attacked; and how perversions and practices on a level other than heterosexual should be handled.

The psychiatrist is the last person to give dogmatic

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

general answers to any of these or similar questions, for his knowledge and experience force him to realize more keenly than any one else can that there are no categorical answers to these questions. The most he can do—when not dealing with an individual case—is to discuss some of the behavior mechanisms involved in various sex activities, indicate how they may lead to the individual's happiness or misery, and suggest some of the methods that have been found helpful in dealing with certain problems in certain individuals. This is attempted in the following discussions.

### SEX TALK AND READING

The ways in which youth from an early age seeks both consciously and unconsciously to find outlets and satisfactions for desires that are either sexual or allied with sex are diverse and numerous. One of the simplest and most common is conversation. Both parents and teachers are frequently alarmed at the sexual precociousness displayed in the conversations of some of their worldlywise children, or concerned, and possibly offended, by what they consider "smutty" or "dirty talk" from "foul-minded" youngsters. Their concern and alarm increase when they discover that these conversations are broadcast to the rest of the juvenile neighborhood and that indignant parents are complaining of having their children contaminated.

The motive behind the conversation may be merely a lively curiosity and desire for information or, in the case of the child already well supplied with information, a desire to show off superior knowledge. When the con-

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

versation tends to be a recital of romantic adventures or shameless exploits, the motive is likely to be a desire for prestige, the child endeavoring to impress his young audience with his experience with, and supposed participation in, mature sex activities.

From six to ten years of age talk of sex nature is usually brought up either to gain this prestige just mentioned or as a means of gaining more information on the subject. The crudeness of language means nothing to the child. The so-called vulgar and obscene expressions serve exactly the same purpose to him as the more refined and scientific vocabulary would serve in a discussion at a medical conference. So the terms and the ideas which they convey need not cause any particular alarm. The concern should rather be over the fact that these youngsters oftentimes have not so much information as misinformation to hand out and discuss, and after it is all over, they are still left wondering and pondering over the subject, with their natural, normal, healthy curiosities unsatisfied. This leads to daydreaming and to much introspection which in itself is likely to be much more sexually stimulating than the sex talk. For this reason it is of the utmost importance that the child be able to regard his parent as a source of information always available, where curiosity can be satisfied whenever stimulated.

Even after the boy and girl reach puberty, and long after they have acquired an intellectual understanding of sex and its relation to much of their social activity, they may still utilize sex talk, obscene words, smutty stories, and recitals of personal experiences (often without a foundation in fact) as a means of gaining prestige,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

and "putting themselves across." In addition, however, they begin to derive from their conversations a vicarious sex thrill—first through the visual and verbal stimulation of an imagined experience, and secondly through the excitement of participating in a conversation which would be frowned upon if not actually forbidden by their elders.

The approach one makes to the problem of this indiscriminate and unwise use of sex conversation, smutty stories and recital of sex experiences depends upon the type of individual, the circumstances under which it occurs, and the purpose that it serves the individual. It does no good to appear shocked and horrified, or to resort to tears or anger. It is far better to give this immature youngster the idea that one has some understanding of just what this activity means to him and the reasons why he is seeking to gain recognition in this particular way. The fact that people in general are offended by this line of conversation, just as they are by bad manners, may be pointed out to him and at the same time other ways of getting recognition may be suggested. With the younger group a frank talk on the subject of sex, making it interesting and unemotional, does more good than any other thing. It gives them a new and more responsible attitude toward keeping the whole subject of sex clean.

The older adolescents will recognize that those who specialize in sex talk represent on the whole individuals who have no other way of making themselves interesting. They are the individuals who would rather be criticized and censored than ignored. As a nine-year-old recently said of another boy his own age who was always talking smut, "He is the dirtiest and the weakest boy in school. I can lick him with one hand." This is frequently true

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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of the chronic offender in sex talk and activity: he is a weakling.

It is well to keep in mind that most children do pass through this phase of using more or less obscene language, causing their parents some concern. It is a period when nice judgment and considerable ingenuity must be exercised. It is not a time to get excited.

One or two individual cases may illustrate some of these points to better advantage.

*Morton's* schoolmaster was fast losing patience with the continuous reports of this boy's smutty stories. He had heard rumors of these tales being told to boys in the corridors, washrooms, and locker-rooms of the school building as well as in the homes of boys he visited. As this obscene chatter appeared to be more than a passing phase in the boy's character development, and not amenable to ordinary school disciplinary measures, the schoolmaster concluded that Morton was foul-minded and feared his influence among the other boys in the school.

Despite a natural inclination to get rid of the boy, the headmaster, being a man of wisdom, was reluctant to expel him without making further effort to get at his problem, for Morton, at sixteen years of age, was a promising student, a popular boy, and a natural leader, and these qualities together with his ability in athletics, made him an otherwise desirable member of the school community. Moreover, he did at times display a line of conversation that was amusing and witty and at the same time clean.

The psychiatrist learned from Morton's father, who was a professor of biology, that the boy had always had a tendency to be "indecent," in his conversation. As a

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

small boy he had frequently embarrassed his family by bringing up some obscene story or discussing some quite inappropriate subject at mealtime in the presence of guests. Repeated lectures on the subject had effected no reform. It was apparent, however, that the father had very little actual contact with his son; he rarely participated with him in any kind of activity, nor did he give the necessary time and attention to make himself interesting to his son.

The relationship was one of an all-knowing, forceful, dominating adult toward a youth who was too young and inexperienced to have any ideas of his own worthy of consideration. Sex was just a matter that was not to be discussed. No allowance was made for the developing curiosity of a maturing adolescent. The boy was actually ignorant of the elementary physiological processes of sex or the knowledge that every boy his age should have about the dangers involved in promiscuous sexual relationships and venereal disease, to say nothing of the positive, healthy, normal, clear outlook on sex as an important factor in contributing to a happy adjustment to life later on.

This was exactly what this boy needed as subsequent events proved, for after getting the whole problem in its proper perspective he no longer was found to be a source of annoyance either at home or at school.

*Helen* was an attractive young western girl twenty years old who came east to complete her education. Her family background was good. Her training both at home and at school had been guided intelligently, and her outlook on life had not been restricted by either her parents or her teachers.



## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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She found it difficult, however, to make a place for herself at once in the conservative eastern college. It is not unlikely that Helen was a little too breezy, had pushed herself along too rapidly, and had rushed in where freshmen were only supposed to "peek." She failed to attract the attention of those whom she looked upon as being most desirable.

It was not long before the Dean began to hear tales of Helen's wild escapades previous to coming to college. Helen had found it comparatively easy to get an audience in the evening by relating her made-to-order tales of night life in the big cities. Her implications were strong that there was little in life that she had not seen or experienced. Needless to say, Helen was not without companionship of a kind until these sessions were rudely interrupted by the college authorities and it was made clear to her that she must find quarters outside the dormitory.

Helen lived "off campus" for the rest of that school year. After a preliminary outburst of rebellion in which she tried to demonstrate the truth of her stories, she became somewhat chastened and reflective and eager for some help in getting straightened out in this matter of living happily with her college classmates. On returning the following year, she made an exceptionally good adjustment to college life both socially and scholastically, and, at the end of her four years, she graduated with honors.

Much of the discussion concerning sex talk applies also to the reading of erotic literature, or literature with a certain amount of erotic content. In discussing the

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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"vogue of the love story" Dr. Blanchard writes, "The adolescent seeks the story which treats of love and passion because of unsatisfied curiosity and the stimulation of erotic feelings which may be obtained from the reading. The boy or girl, absorbed in scenes describing physical contacts between the lovers, reacts with body sensations of pleasurable nature. Or, if the tale be one of high romance, in which the physical side of love plays an attenuated rôle, it offers a phantasy outlet for sublimations of sex impulses. In both kinds of love story, through identification with the hero or heroine, the adolescent is able to reach outside the limitations of personal inexperience and to share the feelings and emotions of maturity."<sup>s</sup>

The danger in this type of erotic literature lies in the fact that much of it portrays situations which are overdrawn and not actually representative of reality as these individuals are to experience it. There is fortunately a sufficient amount of literature available which serves the purpose of sublimating sex urges without stimulating sex phantasies and creating further problems.

### SEX PRACTICES

#### MASTURBATION

The material change in the attitude of scientifically interested people toward the practice of masturbation has already been indicated in the beginning of this chapter. Although the modern tendency is to condone rather than condemn the practice, one cannot solve a problem having

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<sup>s</sup> Groves and Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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so many personal and social implications by any broad generalization. Masturbation, like any other type of behavior, has different meanings and values to different individuals and the practice which could be considered relatively unimportant to one person may be potentially disastrous to another.

The practice of handling or otherwise stimulating the genitals is not limited to adolescents. Most young children make the discovery (either in the course of exploring their bodies, playing some game, or under the influence of other children or unscrupulous adults) that certain parts of their bodies respond more pleasurably than others to touch, and during this early period of "sexual awareness" they may, for a brief time at least, innocently experiment with these new sensations. The importance of discouraging this practice in general by keeping the genitals clean and the clothing comfortable, by carefully supervising the child's visits to the toilet, by being familiar with all his associates, and well-informed as to his activities in various places and at various times of the day, and on specific occasions diverting him from the practice to some other activity or interest without letting him feel self-conscious or ashamed has been stressed in regard to the preschool child.<sup>9</sup>

Personal fears have, however, by no means been entirely dissipated, nor has the idea of the "sinfulness" of this act completely disappeared. Vast numbers of boys and girls are still burdened with this problem through having received either no information or misinformation concerning it.

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<sup>9</sup> See Douglas A. Thom, *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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The habit itself, being so frequently encountered at various age levels in perfectly normal, healthy young people, need cause parents no great concern. This does not mean that it should be ignored or condoned, but when it occurs during adolescence it should give rise to an opportunity to discuss *again* the whole subject of sex—its functions, goals, outlets, sublimations, uses and abuses. It is not a time for evasion, prudery, or deceit, but frank, honest, straightforward education which can only be assimilated and digested when not colored by fears engendered by the old superstitions that the offending one is on the road to physical and mental disintegration. Discussion of a few of the typical adolescent problems which are directly associated with the habit of masturbation may be helpful to parents in getting a better understanding of how greatly involved a situation may become if unwisely managed.

*Roland*, a well-developed, attractive, fourteen-year-old lad was referred to the psychiatrist during the latter part of his first year at a preparatory school because of his failure to live up to the reputation he had begun to make for himself as a keen student, a fine athlete, and an all-round good fellow.

He was reluctant about being interviewed. He appeared very much on the defensive, and it was evident that he had no intention of getting himself involved in any way with one whom he regarded as in a position of authority. On direct questioning he said that he liked the school, that the masters were all right, and that the boys were "decent enough." He had no worries about his home, nor any anxiety over money or poor health. He had received no demerits and was passing in his school work.

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

Nor was he homesick. He was perfectly polite but quite uncoöperative in his attitude. He made it plain that he was in no way inclined to admit that he had a problem or, much less, that he was seeking help.

The effort to discuss his personal problems was abandoned for the moment and the conversation turned to athletics, his home town, college, and the college boat races which were getting some newspaper publicity. He became more friendly and responsive and while the boy was in this mood the psychiatrist said, "Roland, there is one problem which we did not discuss that often causes boys of your age lots of worry." He went on to give him a short talk on sex in general, stressing how little most boys actually knew about it, and how much it meant to their happiness and efficiency to be correctly informed, all the time giving him the information he so much needed. This talk solved Roland's problem. He gave up the idea that he was depraved, that the pimples on his face were caused by masturbation, that he had weakened his brain and wrecked his physical development, and that any one could tell he had indulged in autoerotic practices.

All of Roland's fears were the outcome of a talk given to a group of boys at a camp by an over-zealous councilor, without the knowledge of the director, the previous summer. He had been anxious at times since but not actually worried until his face became covered with pimples. This event verified all the councilor had told him.

Roland had many talks with the psychiatrist during a period of two years, mostly about the problems of other boys whom he was "helping to get things straight." One may venture to guess that Roland became a real asset to

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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his school, for he was well-informed, and he had regained the self-confidence essential to his success as a student, an athlete, and a first-rate friend.

By the time the psychiatrist sees the adolescent who is having conflicts over sex, the situation has usually become involved and invariably there has been considerable elaboration of incidents which in themselves were not particularly important.

*Julia* was an attractive seventeen-year-old girl brought to the psychiatrist by her parents who feared that their daughter was losing her mind. "All she talks about is sex," they complained, "and she has perfectly dreadful thoughts that are absolutely unlike Julia!" Both parents were extremely overwrought and Julia seemed far from happy.

This girl's story is briefly as follows: Masturbation began about the age of eight or nine years and continued with increasing conflict after she had been given some erroneous information by a friend. At the age of eleven this girl was severely upset emotionally when an older boy exposed himself in her presence. She worried much over this experience and, as the scene kept recurring to her at night, she became frightened and excited. But she never told any one about it. At the age of fourteen she masturbated with other girls, her conflict over this practice thereby becoming much more intense. About this time she began to feel that her mind was slipping, and she confided to her father one day, "I cannot control my thoughts; everything makes me think of sex." Presently she developed phobias that she had syphilis or gonorrhea. She was harassed by her mental imagery of most intimate sex experiences which she would visualize

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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herself having with strangers. These were followed by intense feelings of guilt and marked depression.

This girl, brought up in a very strict, prudish, puritanical way, knew nothing about sex save that it was bad, that only those who were depraved thought about it, and that even they didn't talk about it. Her early experiences had led her not only to think much about this terrible subject but also to indulge herself in sex activity; she could, however, at least refrain from discussing it. She carried her own burden as long as she could and when she broached the subject to her mother, she was turned aside with the remark, "You must be crazy to say such things." This was the beginning of her fear that she was losing her mind. She stopped masturbating but could not stop thinking, feeling and imagining herself in various sex situations.

The treatment was directed toward reestablishing her self-esteem, her problem being met with the same frankness as if it had been scarlet fever or some other acute physical illness. She was given to understand that sex was not her personal problem but a problem created by her environment and a problem that many young people have to face, and she was told that her supposed mental symptoms were caused by worry and anxiety due to misinformation rather than by anything she had done. It was also stressed that any type of conduct that was incompatible with her own ideals was not good for her and therapy was successfully directed toward this end.

This case illustrates in particular how pernicious relatively unimportant incidents in the individual's sex development may become, when elaborated through ignorance, misinformation and fear.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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### HOMOSEXUALITY

Among the valuable contributions made by Freud and his colleagues to a better understanding of human behavior, none has had more generally salutary effects than their analysis of the development of the individual's sex life. In the process of reaching the goal of healthy, normal, adult heterosexuality, individuals pass through various stages. During the first, in which they are primarily concerned with themselves, there is naturally much personal exploration and investigation of the individual's own body, invariably accompanied by some type of autoerotic practices. The next stage, in which they are primarily interested in the group, is characterized by an interest in the difference between the sexes and then, usually, an acceptance of both without preference for either. In the third stage, however, growing individuals are interested primarily in those of the same sex—girls seeking the companionship of their mothers, teachers, older sisters, or of outstanding girls in school, and boys displaying a kind of hero worship for their fathers, their older brother's classmates, and the various leaders in sports, games, and other activities in which they are interested.

During this third stage both the boy and girl are likely to be strongly antagonistic toward one another, and it is during this stage—the age period for which must necessarily vary in accordance with the rate of the individual's development and the stimulus of his environment—that so-called “crushes” occur.

Adolescent crushes are much more frequent among girls than among boys, and of less significance in relation



## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

to their social adjustment in adult life. They are common in secondary schools where girls get an attachment for some teacher, sometimes nothing more than a desire for a little mothering, or where one of the younger girls admires one of the older girls from afar, oftentimes without the latter's knowledge. These infatuations often pass by unrecognized by parents and teachers and need cause little concern.

In later adolescence, however, some of these attachments assume proportions which give rise to much anxiety and these relationships demand more serious consideration. In the women's colleges, particularly in the large ones having very cosmopolitan populations, there are invariably several of these close, intimate relationships which give those in authority much concern, create much general gossip, and in one way or another often work out to the disadvantage and unhappiness of the parties concerned.

The seriousness of these relationships depends not so much on the activity indulged in by these individuals, as on the attitude of the parties involved. By far the most of these attachments are superficial and temporary and there is really no overt sexual behavior. Often they are carried on as experiments on a purely social and mental level, and students becoming involved during their freshman year look back upon these experiences with neither regret nor remorse. In other words, well-adjusted, stable, mentally healthy girls indulge in these mildly homosexual experiences without harm to themselves or any one else. This does not mean, however, that they should be passed by unnoticed, for as Dr. Williams states, "If heterosexuality is not accomplished in these four or

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

five years, it never will be accomplished in a normal way. It may be accomplished later by some technical interference, but then only after much conflict, failure, and illness. These four or five years hold the only chance the average boy and girl will have to establish their heterosexuality. Once prevented, it can never come naturally and normally again. It is a real problem, therefore, that faces the child, in spite of the importance of college entrance examinations just ahead, which face the parents."<sup>10</sup>

These very experiences often give the girl opportunity to get a mature point of view on the importance of sex and its relation to life in general. They should be approached in the broadest possible way and the adolescent should be helped to see the importance and value of having a goal in life and not permitting momentary pleasures to divert attention from this objective.

Situations such as these should not be regarded as occasions for coercing young people into being "good" through fear and threats. They should be looked upon as an opportunity for the highest and most valuable type of education on a subject that is far more important than Latin, Greek or geometry, or training in any of the most profitable vocations. It is not difficult for these young people to see the disadvantage they may incur from depriving themselves of the broader social contacts which are prevented by these intimate relationships. They are quick to grasp the idea that some one may be hurt later on if such associations are prolonged, and that biologically such intimate contacts are unsound as they lead away from the more mature relationships of life—hetero-

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<sup>10</sup> Frankwood E. Williams, M.D., *Adolescence*, pp. 112-3.

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

sexual love, marriage, and parenthood. Approached in such a way they are likely to respond with appreciation and coöperation. But if they are made to feel that adults regard their relationship as wrong, bad, or nasty, they will respond and quite rightly so, with violent opposition and rebellion. They may regard it as a point of honor and a test of loyalty to persist in an attachment in which they refuse to see any harm or danger. But what is even more harmful for all future contacts, they will be convinced that their elders have no understanding of their problems, and no appreciation of their code of ethics, and consequently they see no reason to expect help or understanding from them whether as friends, parents, or teachers.

It is a generally accepted fact among those who have given this subject careful study that there is a considerable variation, all within normal limits, in the relative strength of the homosexual and heterosexual components in the inherent make-up of different individuals, and it is quite obvious from rather casual observation that many children pass through the former stage very quickly and at the age of ten are quite engrossed in their heterosexual activity, while others linger and may pass through adolescence before emerging normally and naturally into the more mature social relationships.

Then there are those who for some reason or other never advance beyond the homosexual stage, either because their homosexual urges are so dominant that they become the victims of some unkind biological trick, or because they have perhaps inherited an environment in which the social stimulus essential to foster the growth and development of their heterosexual components has been lacking. Not infrequently, as with other problems

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

of social adjustment, nature and nurture must be regarded as equally responsible.

The better understanding of homosexuality and the recognition of its biological background have been useful not only in helping society to deal with the various social implications of this behavior phenomenon, but also in removing from the individual much of the stigma that was formerly attached to those suspected of living on a homosexual level. Hardly a decade ago the word "homosexuality" could not be used. It had somewhat the same standing socially as the word "bloody" still has in England. To-day it is used with such freedom that it has lost much of its old significance. In fact, those who would be modern often consider it smart to be just a bit "*homo*."

There are two distinct groups of so-called homosexuals. The first, so-called overt homosexuals, who practice various types of sex activity not socially approved, constitute a relatively small group. They are recognized as a social menace. Although they are usually without mental conflict concerning their homosexuality as such, they are subject to anxiety about their social status and to the humiliation of getting involved in legal difficulties by their indiscretions. They are seen by those interested in behavior problems usually because they have offended the social group in some way. The second group is relatively large and far more important inasmuch as it is composed of potentially good citizens. These individuals are torn with conflict; they are battling unseen forces with only defeat ahead unless they are assisted.

In speaking of these two groups Floyd Dell says, ". . . We are not here concerned, . . . with the occasional ar-

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

rival at an overt homosexuality which can be unmistakably recognized as such; we are concerned with the widespread unconscious homosexuality which is ordinarily described by both the individual and a society at large, as 'prudishness' and 'stiffness,' or more favorably as 'unapproachable purity' or 'high ideals,' or even as 'ambition and application to work which leaves no room for interest in the other sex' . . .

"It comes down to a choice between heterosexuality and homosexuality as a goal. Clearly our modern society repudiates overt homosexuality; but the unconscious homosexuality which tends toward the goal and becomes involved in endless and agonizing struggles in the necessary post-adolescent attempt at readjustment to the heterosexual ideal now set before it—this, modern society still permits out of a false respect for patriarchal custom." <sup>11</sup>

There is perhaps no single factor in the individual's early environment that is more important than having parents who are well mated and happy in their love life. Girls in particular are often unfavorably conditioned toward men and marriage by their home experiences. A woman unsatisfied in her sex life, who looks upon sex as being repulsive, something to be avoided under any pretense, is invariably neurotic to some degree; such a woman is quite incapacitated to function well either as wife or mother. She may respond to her children as she does to her husband, repelling all their affections, or what is more likely, and even more disastrous to the children, she is likely to seek in them the emotional satisfactions

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<sup>11</sup> Floyd Dell, *Love in the Machine Age*, pp. 308-9.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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which she has failed to find in her marital relations. Children are quick to sense the satisfactions and dissatisfactions which parents get out of their companionship with each other, and it is not surprising that their own future outlook is conditioned by these early experiences.

Mothers whose sex life has not been happy are the ones who tearfully tell their daughters when they are about to be married that this relationship will put upon them crosses which must be bravely borne and make them feel that it is their duty to suffer in silence.

Of this fact Floyd Dell aptly says, "Back of all these young people stands an army of unhappily married parents, who have not been able to help their children grow up to healthy adult heterosexuality because they were infantile themselves. They—the parents—have not been able to furnish their children the examples of happy and successful manhood and womanhood; nor have they furnished by their own marriage an incentive to achieve adult mating; they have not been able to refrain from exploiting their children emotionally to make up for the absence of normal love in their own lives; and often enough have not been able even to give their children the fundamental assurance that they are loved."<sup>12</sup>

### HETEROSEXUALITY

The point has already been made that the development of a healthy attitude toward sex must have its foundation in early childhood.<sup>13</sup> With the maturing of the child's sex organs and functions, this attitude must develop into

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>13</sup> *Cf.* p. 18; also Thom, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-6.

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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a more definitely and positively heterosexual one. And on the importance of establishing heterosexuality during adolescence we cannot do better than refer again to Dr. Frankwood E. Williams whose much-quoted article, "Confronting the World," is one of the most valuable recent contributions on the subject of adolescence.

### PETTING

Petting has been termed "the ancient game with the modern name" and it is doubtful whether the present generation has introduced into this ancient pastime any technique that has not been practiced in some form or other by their ancestors. It is true that just as the taboo on sex as a topic of conversation at all times and in all levels of society has been lifted by the younger generation, so this subject of petting has received an airing which augurs well for modern sanitation in our social relations as well as in the field of public health.

The old New England custom of "bundling,"<sup>14</sup> when the prospective bride and groom rolled up in blankets together to carry on their courting, which not infrequently resulted in hasty marriages, is a good example of the type of petting socially approved in our own country nearly three centuries ago. At that time it was condoned on the grounds that fuel was scarce and, inasmuch as most of the productive courting was done after the elders had retired, it was not in keeping with the frugal ways of these ancient and honorable puritans to keep the fires going for the benefit of two people.

Sermons were preached on Sunday mornings from the

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<sup>14</sup> William Graham Sumner, *Folkways*, pp. 528-9.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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village pulpits just as they are to-day decrying these practices of the devil, yet there was that group of youngsters who went merrily on, just as they are doing to-day, quite unmindful of the admonitions of their elders and with the same utter disregard for consequences.

There have been, so far as one can determine, no new motives for these indulgences. There is no reason to believe that the sex urge is any stronger to-day than it was three centuries back. Petting continues to be the introductory step to sexual intercourse, as it has ever since the creation of man, and the consequences for the unfortunate ones seem to be quite the same to-day as in the days of old—loss of a certain type of social approbation, mental conflict, pregnancy, and venereal disease.

Stress has been laid on the automobile as an instrument by which petting has been popularized as a pastime and means of entertainment, and there is no doubt that it has contributed in a measure to the number of individuals who otherwise would have found a suitable rendezvous for this purpose more difficult. This is perhaps a less important factor in country life than in the city where scores and scores of cars are being utilized in our public parks for apparently no other purpose.

During the period while prohibition was in force, drinking became very popular for a large group of young people who otherwise might never have participated in this pastime and undoubtedly was a factor worthy of consideration in relation to various forms of sex indulgences. Many adolescents under the influence of the content of the pocket flask lose the inhibitions which otherwise would have prevented indiscretions, with results that cannot be considered other than serious.



## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

The modern dress of women, comfortable, sanitary, attractive and in general most desirable, offers few obstacles to petting, if it does not actually promote and encourage the practice.

Yet after all is said and done, these are only contributing factors and cannot be held responsible for the change in attitude of our present-day generation toward these more intimate relationships between the sexes. Boys are no longer dividing girls into two well-defined groups—the good and the bad—thinking of the first group as being models of perfection and free from all the unholy feelings that lead to sin and destruction, and the second group as composed of instruments of the devil legitimately used for the purpose of gratifying the passions of man. They are no longer impressed with the idea that all girls should be treated as sisters or that the boy is entirely responsible for the girl's conduct.

Parents may not find these pleasant thoughts. We don't like these changes which affect the old traditions; they are annoying and disturbing. Yet the fact must be realized if we are to modernize our education in the subject of sex and so render it efficient and adequate to meet successfully the standards of to-day.

Less and less is the modern boy finding it necessary to have his "Saturday night friend," and his "Sunday sweetheart." He won't demand more from the girl than he is given reason to believe he can get, and right here is where the girl must be taught by education and her early social contacts where harmless relationships leave off and practices leading to sexual intercourse begin. A girl does not have to be endowed with a sixth sense or be a mind reader to know her own limits, and there are signs, if one will

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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but read, that indicate clearly when and where the danger zone lies so far as the man is concerned.

Certainly those adolescents are in danger who accept what Floyd Dell terms the "accepted petting convention of modern adolescence," which has no limits in its attempt to gain not only complete satisfaction but new and more intense thrills which their erotic phantasies lead them to believe are in store for them. Not only are these individuals in danger of pregnancy with its complications, and venereal disease, but many of them are on the road to becoming sexual perverts who, regardless of what they may be called, still are and probably will be for some time to come, a socially ostracized group. These adolescent efforts to squeeze the last kick out of life through the introduction of sex practices of a perverted type cannot but interfere later in many cases with normal heterosexual adjustments. These over-stimulated sex organs will no longer respond physiologically to ordinary methods of intercourse and unless individuals with these perverted tendencies marry other individuals who have been similarly trained sexually, the chances of compatibility are extremely poor. Sexual satisfaction can become fixed on a perverse, as well as on an autoerotic or homosexual, level.

There is no reason to believe that any large portion of those individuals who indulge themselves indiscriminately in what is now commonly called petting—a term which covers a wide range of intimate contacts extending to mutual masturbation and mutual stimulation to the point of producing an orgasm—are actually getting what they are going after. All too frequently one or both of the parties involved find themselves unable to digest these experi-

## Adjustment to Maturing Sex Drives

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ences that may be æsthetically repulsive and therefore not emotionally satisfying. The question of why this type of activity is continued if it gives promise of so little satisfaction is not difficult to answer: In the first place, there is a group of individuals who find no conflicts either social, moral, æsthetic, or emotional, and they carry on their pastimes unhampered by any inhibitions. In the second place, sex activity of the type described is oftentimes a means rather than an end itself; it is regarded as the "price of admission" for a certain popularity and for certain attentions which the girl and boy fear would otherwise be denied them. In the third place, sex indulgence, like alcoholic indulgence, becomes a habit; a physiological demand and appetite are created and these become strong enough to overcome the feeling of repugnance following each previous experience.

### CONCLUSION

By the time adolescence is reached most of these problems should have been discussed as subjects of interest and practical importance rather than as personal problems of the individual child. This approach makes it easier for both the child and his confidant and opens up the door for further discussion of the more personal and intimate aspects of the particular case if desired. One must keep in mind the whole outlook of the adolescent's life: only such methods should be advised for the sublimation of his sex drives as will be helpful to his own satisfactory adjustment to life without being harmful to others.

One can be helpful only in so far as one has the confi-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

dence and respect of the adolescent, and this is brought about by convincing him that one has some idea of his problem and an acceptable plan or philosophy of life to help him meet it. To do this with a fair degree of success necessitates an appreciation and understanding of the adolescent point of view as it is affected by the social custom to-day, whether one approves or disapproves, and above all, an understanding of the particular individual whose conduct is in question.

## CHAPTER IV

### INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES AND DISABILITIES

THE nature of mental growth has been studied barely enough to show how little has really been known about it. The rate of increase in mental growth during childhood and adolescence, its relation to physical growth and to intellectual capacity, the age of development of specific mental activities and powers, the effect of physical illnesses and various environmental factors, sex differences in the nature of mental development, and the age of cessation of mental growth, have all become subjects for investigation, but definite conclusions concerning them are, on the whole, either lacking or unconfirmed by adequate substantiating data.

A sudden increase, similar to that in height and weight, or a consistently rapid increase, similar to that in strength, does not seem to be characteristic of adolescent mental development. Nor does there appear to be any maturing of latent mental functions comparable to the maturing of the reproductive functions. It was once thought that the powers of reasoning and judgment did not appear until adolescence, and that sensory and imaginative powers were suddenly increased at this time. A more careful analysis of the intellectual activity of the young child seems to indicate, however, that these still commonly accepted views are false.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Fowler D. Brooks, *Psychology of Adolescence*, pp. 75-80.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

It is true that the very young child's mental activity is limited to his powers of perception and sensation, *i.e.*, his ability to become aware of objects through seeing, hearing, touching, and feeling them. Evidence of his ability to remember, to imagine, to reason, or to form judgments may be lacking until he has learned to express himself in deliberate acts and words. The development of these abilities is, however, less closely correlated with stages of the child's physiological development than with his experience; and although experience may be to some extent limited by the degree of his physiological development, it is not absolutely dependent upon it. The environment is also an important factor in mental development.

Some of the mental faculties, far from showing increased development during adolescence, apparently cease to grow at about that time. Thus such simple sensory powers as can be measured by the child's ability to discriminate between weights, or to estimate short intervals of time, seem to reach their maximum development at twelve or fourteen years; sharpness and accuracy of the child's sense of hearing and sight seem to show little increase during adolescence, while pain sensations seem definitely to decrease. Although the powers of attention, reason, memory, and judgment do show an absolute increase so that the boy and girl of seventeen or eighteen actually are superior to the child of ten or twelve in these respects, the development seems to proceed fairly regularly, beginning long before adolescence and showing a gradual decrease rather than increase in the *rate* of growth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62ff.

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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When mental growth is thus studied, not as a whole, but in its various separate activities, it becomes more difficult to determine the age of cessation of development. For although the development of intellectual ability, as measured by one's capacity to think in terms of abstractions, may come to a stop at the close of the teens, planning ability, and the ability to manage one's self and adjust to other people may very easily continue to develop during the early twenties and later.

Elaborate studies attempting to show correlations between aspects of physical and of mental growth have as yet yielded no definite means of predicting the individual's mental development. As one writer concludes, ". . . Knowledge of a boy's height, weight, strength, ossified area (or ratio) of wrist bones, physiological age, or any other physical trait thus far carefully investigated, cannot be used to give estimates of his intellectual status. Estimating intelligence from physical status is not likely, on the average, to be even five per cent more accurate than guessing. . . . The best means now available for predicting the possibilities of an adolescent's intellectual development is a good intelligence examination."<sup>3</sup>

### INTELLIGENCE TESTS

From a practical point of view the numerical ratings as indicated by "intelligence quotients" have but limited value. A child may attain a high "I.Q." which would lead one to believe that he was quite superior, whereas careful study of the whole test might reveal that this high numerical rating was attained because this particular child

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

had a superior memory while his judgment and reasoning were only average.

The quality of individual answers and the general quality of the test are quite as important as quantity in the score. It is equally important to know just what opportunities the child's environment has contributed in the way of stimuli. Intellectual equipment, like physical equipment, needs to be properly nurtured to assure maximum development.

The nature of failure is as significant as the nature of success, in indicating the type of intelligence that is being tested. The six-year-old child, who, when asked to draw a diamond, says right off, "I can't do that, but I can draw a square," shows remarkable insight into his limitations as well as his abilities.

To be of real value an intelligence test must be administered by one who is not entirely dependent on the application of the formal tests to evaluate the mental equipment of the child. Its interpretation requires far more skill and experience than does the giving of it. It is comparable in a way to an X-ray examination: A skilled technician may make excellent plates, but only one well trained in anatomy, physiology and pathology, can interpret these plates so that they will be of value to the physician or surgeon treating the patient. Any intelligent adult who has had a course in "mental testing" may be able to give routine tests and obtain "I.Q.'s," but only one with a specialized training in psychology, considerable experience in intelligence testing, and an understanding of the relation between test results and environmental background, scholastic achievement, and social behavior can interpret the findings so that they will



## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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be of valid use to parents, teachers, psychiatrists, and social agencies.

It is the task of the experienced clinical psychologist to evaluate all the varied factors which contribute to mental growth and development, before making a diagnosis and prognosis as to the child's mental equipment. Obviously such an intricate examination, the results of which are to be used in determining the individual's educational plans, his vocational aptitudes, or the question of his responsibility for his conduct, should not be turned over to the teacher, nurse, or any other person without special training and adequate experience in giving psychological examinations. Such examinations are absolutely without value and furnish nothing but misinformation, which, if utilized, leads to many mistakes and, oftentimes, irreparable injustices and damage to the child. Parents have not only a right, but a responsibility to know that when these tests are being used by the teachers as a criterion of the child's intellectual equipment, they are being given and interpreted by a well-trained psychologist. Then, and only then, are these psychological examinations of *real value*.

Notwithstanding the fact that parents, teachers and physicians no longer entertain the idea that there is in any sense a state of intellectual equality existing at birth, the mere recognition of these intellectual differences, and the development of tests to measure these variations, have done comparatively little toward developing educational plans and methods of training, commensurate with these varying intellectual needs.

The question of the child's intellectual equipment, and the recognition of intellectual inferiority and superiority,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

as well as of various conditions having adverse effect on the normal functioning of the individual with average<sup>4</sup> intellectual endowment, is one of greatest concern to the parent.

### INTELLECTUAL INFERIORITY

The parent who has the responsibility for the care, education and training of the intellectually inferior child can receive only limited help from the specialist in this field. The handicap with which such a child is born—or which has been the result of some disease—cannot be completely overcome and, in many instances, cannot even be satisfactorily compensated for in other activities. Experience and research have, however, contributed much that should be helpful to parents and teachers in gaining a better understanding of these problems and in helping these intellectually inadequate individuals so that they will at least approach their maximum efficiency and obtain from life the greatest amount of happiness which their handicap will permit them.

There is little excuse for the intellectually inferior child's escaping notice after he has reached the school age, and many of these children are detected long before that. It was not necessary, for example, to wait until Irving Y. entered school to realize that his indifference to enlarging his childish vocabulary beyond such expressions of irascibility as "keep still" and "shut up," his inability to play intelligently with other children, and his distracting habit of screaming violently were indicative of a mental retar-

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<sup>4</sup> It would be difficult to explain just what one means by "average" or "normal" child to a scientific group, but fortunately parents will grasp what is meant.

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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dition which was clearly revealed in a psychological examination.

The greatest difficulty is not in identifying the intellectually inferior child but in getting the parents to face the problem frankly and to institute methods of education and training that will work out to the advantage of each particular child. It is not surprising that parents are reluctant to admit in their child a condition which often represents nothing less than a tragedy to the family. Through their refusal to face the situation, however, and through their ignorance and emotional instability, parents themselves often create the tragedy with which the child will be confronted in the future. The blame may lie at the door of their professional adviser who through lack of knowledge, and sometimes through unwarranted sentimentality, sends the parent away with the false hope that "the child is all right—he will outgrow it."<sup>5</sup> Parents, of course, are all too willing to accept this optimistic viewpoint and the child is subjected to intellectual tasks and social responsibilities which he is not intellectually qualified to meet.

Thus *Ellis* was, for example, pushed along to the seventh grade without receiving any consideration for his

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<sup>5</sup> This discussion is not intended to minimize in any way the difficulties encountered in many of the borderline cases in which intellectual ability is in question. Whenever there is a question as to intellectual capacity the child should receive the benefit of the doubt and the parents should always be given the most favorable prognosis which conditions justify. Yet there is no advantage and there are many disadvantages to both parents and child in not utilizing every means at hand which will be helpful in evaluating the intelligence of the child who has shown evidence of his inability to meet the social and intellectual demands that are being successfully met by other children of his chronological age and his same cultural, social and intellectual level.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

limitations. He was at that time fourteen years of age and it was obvious that despite his very best efforts he could not do seventh grade work. He seemed very tired, irritable and excited and felt that every one was picking on him. When he was hurried, he would get so nervous that his hands trembled. He also engaged in much irrelevant conversation and would babble on excitedly about murders committed at the camp where he had spent his summer, and other similarly weird tales.

A psychological examination showed this boy to be three years retarded, and his immediate removal from the seventh grade to a special school or class where he could be taught slowly and with care was recommended.

Neglect or failure to recognize and provide for intellectual limitations is, however, no more tragic in its consequences than is improper institutional commitment or school placement. The responsibility for providing the right training for these children is a very grave one, and cannot be dismissed by simply institutionalizing a child without careful study of his mental equipment. The unfairness of such procedure is strikingly illustrated in the case of Albert.

*Albert* came to the psychiatrist when he was fifteen years old, accompanied by his maternal grandfather. He had just returned from a school for mental defectives, and the question of what to do with him next, as well as the problem of controlling his aggressive interest in girls was giving the grandfather adequate reason for anxiety.

Albert was at this time living with his grandparents, his own home being in its usual state of disorganization. His mother was a woman of superior intellectual and cultural

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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background and seemed to be emotionally stable and intellectually adequate, but she was an unaffectionate woman, and rebuffed any advances from her son. Albert's father was an eccentric individual who was always requiring special attention and consideration and special living conditions—presumably because he was planning to do some unusual thing which, however, he never got around to doing. He was an attractive-looking man and well-mannered, and his wife had been very much attracted to him, but they had not been married long before she discovered that matrimony did not so readily convert this charming and irresponsible roamer into a steady, reliable husband. There was little thought of settling down to peaceful family life; even without settling down, he found the arrival of his five offspring distasteful and irksome and managed to be with them as little as possible. He was quite uncontrolled in his emotional reactions; he would have violent fits of temper toward his wife, and would swear at the children and hold them responsible for everything that went wrong, and for every mishap for which he was himself responsible. He was thoughtlessly cruel in his speech, never hesitating to tell his children that he considered them ugly and offensive. After much wandering around—during all of which time the family had no established home—he purchased a southern farm and settled down to be a gentleman farmer. Albert's mother meanwhile spent most of her time "visiting" and the other children were placed in boarding schools.

Albert's behavior in a large measure merely reflected the abnormal environment in which he was brought up. He was regarded as "queer," and full of strange fears and inhibitions. His grandparents had become much con-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

cerned over him and, when he was eleven years old, they had decided to take him away from his environment and place him in a special school for unusual children. He got on fairly well there but after two years it was thought wise to place him on a farm. Here he received a certain amount of training with a small group of boys and girls, all of whom were definitely mentally defective. At last even the grandparents realized that they were perhaps being well-intentioned without being wise in planning Albert's education and they brought him back home. It was at this time that they began to observe his aggressive interest in girls and became even more anxious about him and the possible difficulties into which he might heedlessly plunge.

Albert, at fifteen, was an ungainly-looking youth with poor posture, awkward movements and poor motor coordination. In spite of this picture of general inferiority, no evidence of any organic illness or defect was revealed in his physical examination, while his psychological examination showed only moderate retardation.

Here is a boy whose retardation may well be attributed to the meagerness of his environment which failed entirely to take into consideration his poor motor coordination, left-handedness and awkwardness over which he was feeling extremely sensitive and inadequate. All his misgivings about himself were verified in his own mind when he was placed with obviously defective children. Only in part can we hope to overcome the mistake of which this boy has been the victim, but such thoughtful consideration, effort and experience are now being expended as will do all possible to overcome a handicap that has always been more apparent than real.

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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The planning of the lives of these individuals who do not conform to a common pattern should be directed by some one who is capable of evaluating their abilities as well as their disabilities.

Ordinarily, conditions of serious mental defect will have been diagnosed and plans for care will have been instituted before the child has reached adolescence. During this age period the real concern is with boys and girls whose mental equipment has been good enough to enable them to "get by" successfully at home, on the playground, and in school, but does not seem adequate to enable them to continue to keep up with their fellows. This state of affairs usually comes to light first of all on the school report card and is, moreover, a problem that is in many respects limited to competition in the scholastic field. The cases of Vincent and Bertram both illustrate this type of situation.

*Vincent* entered school at the age of six. He plodded along with only indifferent success, reaching the fifth grade at the age of twelve, but his inability to compete with the other children of his age was always attributed to "inattention" and "lack of concentration," and the status and quality of his intellectual equipment had never been questioned.

Vincent showed a keen interest in games and amusements, was clever in doing things with his hands, and was said to have an excellent memory. Although he did not make friends easily, there was no evidence that he did not get on well with other children. He was obedient, both at home and in school, and in general seemed to be a happy boy.

After he had floundered about in fifth grade for a week,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

however, his teacher concluded that he had best be demoted back to fourth at this point. His parents became a bit concerned about his indifference, and began to entertain the idea that he must be suffering from some special handicap.

A psychological examination revealed the fact that Vincent's mental age was two years below his chronological age. He had a good memory, and this was undoubtedly helpful to him in acquiring general information which covered up, in part, his poor judgment and reasoning ability, and his helplessness in grasping new situations as brought out in the tests having to do with learning capacity.

In the light of the information gathered from the psychological examination, it appeared that Vincent was not properly placed in school. Considering that he had been subjected for a period of years to intellectual tasks that were beyond him, and in which failure was inevitable, he was really not doing a bad job with his limited intellectual equipment.

Vincent's parents, being concerned primarily with the boy's well-being, rather than with their own ambitions for him, accepted the fact that he could not compete successfully with others of his chronological age. They took it upon themselves to gather all available information that would be helpful to them in guiding and directing the boy to fit himself for some vocation in which his manual skill, his perseverance, his coöperative spirit, and other assets could be utilized to the best advantage.

These parents could have made no greater contribution toward this boy's future happiness and efficiency than that of frankly recognizing his inadequacies in meet-



## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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ing the demands of any program involving higher education.

*Bertram* was another boy with a rather poor intellectual equipment. He was thirteen years of age when first seen by the psychiatrist, and was between one and two years retarded mentally. His situation was complicated, however, by his physical overgrowth; he was four inches above average height and thirty-one pounds over average weight—with the physical development of an eighteen-year-old lad.

As has been pointed out earlier, excess in physical development may be associated with intellectual dullness, all of the individual's energy apparently being directed into physical channels. This boy had the type of mental equipment that was not well adapted to scholastic endeavors. Although his judgment and reasoning were good, his memory was poor, and he found it difficult to retain subject matter that was dependent very largely upon memory. However much this handicapped him in school, it by no means doomed him to failure in earning a living even in the business world, for this boy made friends easily, got on well with all kinds of people, and in general made quite satisfactory social adjustments.

Bertram was brought to the psychiatrist because of his inability to meet the scholastic requirements of his school. He felt his situation very keenly, for he was by far the largest boy in his class and, at the same time, the one having the most difficulty with his studies. His muscular coordination had not been well developed, nor had he had the necessary training to compete in athletics with boys of his size. Neither did he have the background and experience to make himself interesting to these boys in a

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

social way. On the other hand, he felt out of place when mingling with boys of his age.

It seemed wise to send this boy away to a boarding school in which the development of the individual was regarded as an end in itself, rather than as a means of gaining admission to college. All the information available about the boy, together with the psychiatrist's interpretation of his difficulties, was conveyed to the headmaster of this school, with the suggestion that Bertram should not be expected to progress equally well in all directions, and that an effort should be made to develop such assets as he had. It was urged in particular that his athletic activities be directed with a view to improving his muscular coördination.

Again, an appreciation of the boy's type of intellectual equipment, consideration of ways and means for developing the boy as a whole rather than focusing attention on his particular disability, or endeavoring to raise his intellectual achievements to some arbitrary peak, worked out to his advantage.

It is to be deplored that in the general scheme of education our secondary schools make practically no provision for meeting the needs of the boy whose intellectual limitations forbid his becoming a candidate for college entrance. Practically all first-rate preparatory schools frankly admit that there is no room for the boy who is not college material, and if it happens that the head of a school is willing to take on a few such boys, understanding their limitations, the masters soon get discouraged with them. The students themselves are quick to sense this and soon lose their enthusiasm and begin to feel inade-

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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quate. Instead of trying to reach certain peaks in intellectual achievement, these boys should be getting a broad, general education on whatever level their intellects will permit.

Even if such opportunities existed and there were schools and teachers interested in the education of the individual as an end in itself, it is doubtful whether many parents would avail themselves of the opportunity to render service to the child at the expense of their pride. Unhappy as the thought may be, false pride on the part of parents not only permits but pushes children into situations where failure is inevitable.

Many of the social problems arising in adolescence follow continuous failure on the part of the child to make a place for himself in society. Much of our juvenile delinquency represents an attempt of young people to compensate for feelings of failure. The adolescent who is handicapped by poor intellectual equipment needs careful study and individual consideration that he may be aided in finding a place in life where his emotional needs will be satisfied without bringing him in conflict with society.

### INTELLECTUAL MEDIOCRITY

In the preceding section, intellectual inferiority has been presented as a more or less absolute condition; that is to say, a child with a mental development several years below that of the average child of the same chronological age, has been regarded as intellectually inferior. There comes a time, however, when the child having an "average" intellectual development may be regarded as intellectually inferior, and when the question of education or

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

training may present as great a problem as it does in the case of the mentally retarded child. For the higher the child progresses in the educational scheme, the higher will be the "average" with which he must compete. This is a point about which there is sufficient misunderstanding to warrant its further discussion.

Mental development is measured by no absolute scale. If all the children in grammar school were divided into three groups—the "A" group being those with superior intellect, the "C" with inferior intellect, and the "B" group containing all those in between—then a child in the "B" group might be regarded as having average intellectual development. But by the time these children were ready for high school, the "C" group would be unable to make the grade, and consequently only the "A" and "B" groups would enter. It would soon be apparent that some of the "B" group were less able to do the high school work than the others and so they would fall into a "C" group of their own and drop out sometime in the course of the four years. But of those who graduated, probably only the "A" group would be good college material, and not even all of those.

When a parent is told that his child has an intelligence quotient ranging between 95 and 105, and therefore has an "average" intellectual equipment, he must realize that although this might place the child in the "B" group in grammar school, it by no means indicates that he could remain in the "B" group if he entered college.

Psychologists are just as human as other specialists, and some of them will try to explain such a situation in euphemistic terms, pointing out that although the child's general level of intelligence is "average" or "below aver-

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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age," he shows various unusual traits which tend to place him in a class with those having a higher general level of intelligence. But experience shows that such individuals struggle against unfair odds when they are obliged to compete with their intellectual superiors, and they themselves are made to suffer.

Even in his own home, the child with an average mental equipment may present a problem of relative intellectual inferiority, if his parents and the other children in the family have brilliant minds, and predominating intellectual interests.

The following cases are typical of some of the problems encountered in situations in which despite "average" intelligence a child was relatively inferior.

*Warren* was a boy with an "average" mental equipment. He went through the elementary grades without any special difficulty and was standing above the middle of his class when he finished the sixth grade at the age of eleven and a half years. He began to slump in the seventh grade and by the time he had reached the eighth grade his work had become so poor, and was so carelessly done, that his father had to begin helping him at home.

Warren's father was a clergyman. Little is known about the early relation between father and son. The mother reported that on one occasion the father had cried out impatiently something about Warren's being a "stupid" fellow who never could learn anything. She attached considerable importance to this and thought it accounted for Warren's feeling of inferiority.

It was not until Warren entered high school, however, that the trouble became acute. His father's own description of this experience is most enlightening.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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Warren's first year in high school was very bad for him. He was taking the college preparatory course. I gave him constant attention, assisting him with his Latin and Algebra, and, towards the end of the year, with his ancient history. He did his English by himself but I think he would have failed in this if his teacher had set proper standards. In March he became very nervous, and it was evident that he could not carry all the work. He dropped his Latin and, by dint of personal attention from me, succeeded in getting through the rest of his studies.

He spent the summer at Camp B. and did very well, winning the camp letter and passing the Junior Red Cross life-saving test.

In the fall he returned again to the local high school.

It soon became evident that he could not carry the work without a great deal of help. He was *very greatly discouraged* and *nervous*. When I worked with him he would get "nerved up." It was wearing on me. At this point his mother took things practically into her own hands and made arrangements for him to go to a private school.

He appears to have been very happy and to have behaved well, but he has failed most of his subjects.

The father's letter then continues with a revealing description of the boy's behavior.

One of the marked features of his case is that he refers to himself as a "dumb-bell" and says that he will never amount to anything. One night this June, after he had been at home for about two weeks, he had a bitter crying spell about his failure in school and said that he would have to go off and live as a hermit for the rest of his life as he could not be of any use in the world.

He teases his younger brothers and that has many times led to bad quarrels. At times he has exasperated me almost to distraction by his insolence. I used to give him corporal punishment, and I have at times struck him in anger. I am fully

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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aware that I have not always dealt calmly and wisely with him.

Since he has been back from New Hampshire, he has been working in a local store, using an adding machine and doing miscellaneous clerical work. So far he has not been discharged. He seems happy in this work and likes both his superiors and his associates.

So far as we know, he is clean morally. He does not smoke.

This perhaps serves to suggest enough of the father's attitude. His letter continues for several more pages in the same vein. He is chagrined to the limits of his power of self-control that *he*, a man who has always set great store by intellectual accomplishments, and was always successful in his own scholastic endeavors, should have so stupid and dull a son!

He is puzzled, as well as chagrined. Why should this have happened? Is he to blame? Possibly he has been too severe with the boy? Yet he has helped him with his lessons; he has sent him to camp for several summers; he has had his tonsils removed; he has had him examined annually by a specialist in preventive medicine; and he has had him tested annually, since the age of twelve, by a consulting psychologist who recommended the college preparatory course. Something must be wrong with him. He suggests several possibilities. Instruments had been used on his head at birth. Could this have affected his mind? He had had diphtheria and colitis as a young child. Would either of these enter into his present reactions? He had not yet developed sexually as far as other boys of his age. Could this be an important factor. Or was his behavior indicative of some nervous or mental disorder?

The one explanation which does not suggest itself to him or which he refuses to admit, is that his son may have

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

been born with no more than average mental ability and that his own critical, over-ambitious, and extremely emotional attitude has aroused such conflicts in the boy that he is unable to make the best use of even his limited ability.

*John* was a well-developed boy, thirteen years of age, whose family background had supplied him with sufficient cultural and social interests to assure his maximum intellectual development. He was referred to the psychiatrist because of his failure to live up to the expectations of his parents who were disappointed in the poor quality of his school work and disturbed over his attitude of rebelliousness and resentfulness toward all authority at home.

John had an ordinary intellectual equipment with an I.Q. of 103. He was receiving low marks in most of his school subjects, and even those marks were questioned by his parents who thought that the masters were inclined to pass too lightly over his failures. He had been kept up with his class by much extra effort during the school year and persistent tutoring during his vacations. He had, however, reached the stage where repeating a grade seemed inevitable.

Unfortunately for John, both his father and mother had so few interests outside the home that their chief occupation was trying to stimulate their only son to do better work in school. When they were not themselves actively engaged in this occupation, a tutor and governess were doing the job for them.

This boy had already come to a realization of the fact that, compared to most of the boys attending his school, he was intellectually inferior. His self-assertive attitude at home was in part an outward expression of his result-



## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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ant feeling of inadequacy and in part an effort to break away from the constant supervision which he felt he had outgrown.

Unfortunately this boy's family traditions required that he have a college education—not only that, but an education in a college where scholastic standing was the highest and athletic competition the keenest. The mere preparation for college was an intellectual task of which this boy was manifestly incapable and in which, in spite of all application and effort, failure was inevitable.

John is still grinding away, unhappy and disgruntled with life, getting nothing out of his school life but mediocre marks. He is cut off from the social contacts he should be developing, and he contributes nothing to the satisfaction of his parents except in so far as he keeps alive the flame of hope that some day he will be allowed to enter the sacred halls in the temple of learning where his father trod.

*Philip* was also referred to the psychiatrist because of poor school work. This lad's family background was perhaps not quite as rich in the cultural and intellectual elements as was John's but was much better endowed with good, common sense.

Philip was a twelve-year-old boy who had always had more or less trouble in his school work, particularly in spelling and writing. He had been moved along in the routine of the educational system, however, and had reached the sixth grade without having had to repeat. Then the poor quality of his written papers and examinations brought his average so low that further promotion became impossible.

Philip's parents reported that he had a good disposition, was obedient, sympathetic, affectionate, and con-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

siderate of others. Although they regarded him as a rather quiet and reserved boy, they knew that he had had no difficulty in making friends and keeping them.

Philip had never been very successful in sports, but he enjoyed swimming and baseball and handled tools fairly well. He was the type of boy who contributes much to his camp experiences and gets much out of camp activities.

Psychological examination indicated that Philip had an intelligence quotient of 95, but the quality of his work was rather superior to the quantity. His judgment and reasoning ability were above average and, although he did not handle abstract situations on a level commensurate with his chronological age, he was not outstandingly dull.

This boy, with his average intellectual equipment, was also competing in a class where the group, on the whole, was rather superior, and presently he developed the idea that he was stupid, and inferior to his fellows. He was already thinking of his future in terms of failure in school work.

A consultation with his parents resulted in the selection of a school where other abilities besides intellectual brilliance were recognized, and where the boy would have an opportunity of meeting with success and thus building of his self-confidence and developing his self-regard. The parents were advised that so far as his mental development was concerned, Philip was not college material.

These parents, being more interested in the welfare of the boy than in their own ambition for another college degree in the family, helped Philip to make the most of what he had, and to do well those things which were within his capacity.

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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The higher the individual progresses in the educational system, the higher will be the "average" intellectual equipment with which he must compete. He will no longer be measured in terms of the intelligence of the general population but will be judged in terms of the intellectual equipment of his specific group. He may, for example, be classified according to a system of percentile ranking, by which the high 10 per cent of the class are accorded marks between 90 and 100; the next 10 per cent rank between 80 and 90 and so on, the lowest 10 per cent being designated by marks between 0 and 10. Although there is no sharp line of demarcation between those students grading intellectually with the high 10 per cent and those grading intellectually with the low 10 per cent, there is a marked difference between the groups as a whole, manifesting itself in the type of work which they are capable of doing. This does not mean that all those students in the low group fail, nor that all those belonging to the high intellectual group necessarily meet with brilliant success in academic pursuits. It does mean in a general way, however, that one group achieves scholastic success with a comparative ease while the other group is likely to encounter difficulties in spite of heroic effort.

There are certain similar characteristics and differences which appear in the consideration of both *special abilities* and *special disabilities*. As one individual may build his mental life around some special talent in such a way as to unfit him for the performance of duties upon the level of his real ability, so another may integrate himself around some special disability in such a manner that he builds up feelings of inadequacy to a degree that will hinder him in exercising the normal ability he may possess in other

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

fields. In fact, in time his disability may assume such proportions as to prevent him from holding his place in society as a normal member. Then, too, a special disability differs from a special ability in that the latter may be capitalized in such a manner as to enable an individual to fit into an economical scheme that will eventually lead to the happy adjustment of the person.

The tea-taster, by his unusual sense of taste, may fill a position in the business world that is quite unique. There is nothing, however, in a special disability that can be utilized. The only alternative is an early recognition of a disability and a minimizing of the handicap as much as possible by correct methods of education.

It is not the purpose, nor is this the place to go into any great detail about special abilities. Enough shall have been accomplished if it is shown that such handicaps exist and at the same time indicate the effect that such a handicap may have upon the individual.

It is well recognized that the ease with which one acquires the use of language varies greatly with individuals. For reasons unknown, one may become very facile in its use with apparently little effort. On the other hand, one often meets a child for whom the learning of language has been one upward grind. Even with all his endeavors he has no large vocabulary at his command; in fact he has acquired but little mastery over the medium through which he must communicate his idea. In truth, his verbal linguistic development is much below his more accepted general aptitudes. With such a child his difficulty is often augmented when he attempts to learn to read. Although many years may have been spent within the four walls of a schoolroom, he is able to recognize only a few of the

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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simplest words. In fact, his disability may be so pronounced that he is often considered "word blind." The case of Francis will serve to illustrate the handicap of a child working under such a disability.

At the age of eleven years and ten months *Francis* had made practically no progress in reading. Such simple words as "boy" and "dog" were the extent of his visual recognition. This boy was presently assigned to a special class for the feeble-minded where he promptly came to the attention of the supervisor of special classes, who singled him out as one who did not rightfully belong to such a class. As a result Francis was referred to the psychiatrist for special advice and help.

A brief psychological examination revealed many interesting facts. It was learned that the first years of the boy's school instruction had been spent in a French parochial school, although he had been attending a public school for the last four years. French was also spoken in the home. In conversation he talked with hesitancy, often with a blocking of speech. The boy had been in early life converted to right-handedness.

Francis' intelligence quotient was only 73, but an analysis of the boy's successes and failures threw further light upon this lad's difficulty. As would be expected, vocabulary and language items were his chief failures, and as he fell in that part of the scale which is particularly weighted with language and vocabulary items, his score was inevitably low. His immediate auditory memory was extremely poor. He could not repeat verbatim a sentence that the average six-year-old child could repeat. Since all memorizing had had to be learned by ear and his auditory memory was naturally poor—items of a rote nature were

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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failed. For instance, Francis could not name all the days of the week. His repetition was as follows—"Monday, Tuesday, and whatever to-day is—" in this way showing a normal perception and orientation of time. With the vocabulary items ruled out and the language factors reduced to a minimum, Francis' score immediately rose. He showed good ability in detecting absurdities and in working out a plan in practical situations. In fact, in a large series of performance tests Francis' major scores were equivalent to that of the average adult.

There is no question but that Francis is an intelligent boy, but his special disability is at present closing for him an avenue through which many facts must come to him if he is to proceed in a normal development.

It is now known that individuals differ greatly in other respects. For instance, there are great variances in visual memory. One individual may be so deficient in his ability to reproduce what he has seen that he suffers from a real disability. In another individual, the ability to reproduce what has been seen may be so great that the vividness of his afterimages may almost force him to regard them as realities. Experimentation has shown that some children, particularly, possess this ability to such a degree that they can revive in detail pictures they have seen, spell out words reproduced, even though these words are in a foreign language and have no special meaning to them. This may be said to be visual representation at its best.

Almost every one has some power of reproducing what has been seen, and even though the memory has not been so clear, yet enough may remain to serve as a cue. Undoubtedly many a recitation has been saved for a child

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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because the answer could be visualized as being at the top of the left-hand page. To others the ability to revive visual presentations may be so poor as to aid them but little, if at all. In their lack of power to visualize past experiences they have a real disability. They are unfortunately deficient in one of the senses which formal education draws upon largely in the instruction of the individual.

There are numerous other special disabilities which are related to learning ability—speech, sight and hearing—as well as those disabilities that are created by unwise handling of the normal differences existing in many individuals such as are seen in those who are left-handed. All these special disabilities need most careful consideration when parents and teachers are confronted with outlining a plan of education. Laboratory work in these various fields is constantly presenting new ways and methods of overcoming or reducing these disabilities to a minimum, and the wise parent and teacher will seek advice as soon as they recognize that there is a disparity between achievement and the intellectual equipment of the student.

### INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY

The old idea that the child who is intellectually gifted is likely to be physically inferior and socially inadequate, or to have a queer, twisted personality, has been discredited by both extensive and intensive studies of the gifted child. The investigations of Dr. Terman and his co-workers have indicated, on the contrary, that the child who is superior intellectually is likely to be superior in all

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

aspects of his physical and mental make-up. That even this superior intellectual equipment may create difficulties and require special consideration has not yet been adequately recognized, however, either in the home or in the school.

The thirteen-year-old boy with a physical development in keeping with his years, but the mental equipment and academic achievements of a sixteen-year-old, may well find that although he is the intellectual leader in his class, his fellow classmates, disconcerting as it may be, are more mature in their social interests. His muscular development and motor coördination, although perfectly normal for his years, are not yet sufficiently far advanced to permit him to participate in competitive sports with classmates a year or two his senior. He is likely to be looked down upon as a mere bookworm by the other members of his class who function more or less as a group in their varied school activities. On the other hand, he has little in common with the great majority of those of his own age; he has developed way beyond their intellectual level and they make no place for him in their social activities. His whole problem of social adjustment becomes exaggerated when he is held up by his teachers to other pupils in the schoolroom, or by his parents to the other children in the home, as a shining example of what they should try to be like—a practice that is unfair not only to the superior child but also to the other child who if at all sensitive is likely to entertain the idea that he is inferior.

Occasionally one of these superior children falls down in his school work and is not recognized as superior or is even looked upon as dull. This may be due to the fact



## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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that the tasks presented to him in the schoolroom have failed to challenge his interests or his intellect. This situation is illustrated in the following case of Regina.

*Regina* was referred to the psychiatrist when she was twelve years old because of her very poor school work which appeared to be due to lack of concentration and poor methods of study rather than to a lack of ability. The parents stated that she had no conception of the need of conscious effort in "learning her school work." It was pointed out by her teacher that her "abstract reasoning was poor and that she was unable to see things with a clear perspective." Regina appeared rather immature as compared to other girls her age and was inclined to be evasive. But she was kindly, thoughtful, well-mannered, and had considerable social grace and therefore had many friends.

Psychological examination indicated that this girl had rather superior intellectual equipment, three years in advance of her chronological age. She showed excellent ability in problems requiring initiative and also had talents that indicated leadership. These facts were revealed to the parents and to her teachers in school and were discussed in considerable detail with the girl herself with the result that her school program was rearranged, and she was given more responsibilities at home. What was even more important, Regina was made to realize that she was well-endowed intellectually and had capabilities which she was not using.

The result was immediate and most satisfactory. This girl went on with uninterrupted success in her school work and accepted social responsibilities in keeping with her superior intelligence.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

It is obvious that this particular problem is more likely to be found in the lower grades and less frequently in high school and college. In the first place the superior child has usually been recognized by the time he has reached the higher levels of education and, secondly, provisions can be made in both high school and college with less difficulty for giving breadth to the curriculum.

In contrast to such cases as that of Regina, there is a group of young people who have done very well with their superior intelligence, and won recognition and praise in their school work but who have grown tired of being known only as "smart pupils" or "bright students," who have become satiated with the approval of adult teachers and parents, and who are craving a bit of recognition from their fellows. Appreciating that superiority in the classroom is sometimes a barrier to the social acceptance they covet, they may become self-conscious and unduly sensitive. With a premeditated indifference, they may allow their work to slide with a hope of failure, using these tactics as a means of getting in socially with the group. This reaction is analogous to the well-recognized fact that men and women both have a keen desire to gain recognition in some field outside their chosen vocation. There comes a time when the famous surgeon craves to be known as an author, the actor as a writer, the lawyer as a statesman, and the business man as an art critic.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the individual with the superior intellectual equipment, begins early to seek recognition in other fields, and that if his academic achievements interfere with his successfully reaching other goals he may discard his primary interests for the moment. Usually this radical method of procedure is not

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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necessary and certainly not desirable, but, in their youthful impetuosity many boys and girls make just this mistake.

Despite the fact that Terman's findings regarding the intellectually superior child are generally accepted by psychologists and psychiatrists, it must be admitted that there are a certain number of these superior children who, like their less well-endowed fellows, fail in their social adjustments. Often their superior intellects are their sole means of compensation for their inability to get on happily with other human beings, and they turn their backs upon mankind in general, seeking in laboratories and libraries additional knowledge which will set them above even their own intellectual peers. Some of these individuals contribute much that is of value in science, literature and the fine arts, but most of them develop into queer, eccentric, unhappy, asocial individuals, entirely out of harmony with the world in which they live. They have used their superior intelligence as a means of satisfying their own egocentric aims and ambitions, and not as a means of contributing something worth while to the world at large. Their failure to make social contacts, and get adequate satisfactions from intercourse with the group, cannot be attributed to their superior intellectual endowments, however, but rather to circumstances and conditions to which they have been subjected—poverty, the educational system, over-ambitious parents, and failure to develop those important attributes of personality which tend to socialize the individual.

*Superior special talent* requires separate discussion, for the child with superior special talent may also belong to any one of the groups already discussed. The child with

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

musical talent may also have inferior general intelligence, or some special intellectual disability as poor memory or inferior imaginative powers, or general intellectual ability of the same superior quality as his special talent.

There is almost no limit to the amount of misunderstanding and misconception common to parents, and others, regarding the significance of special ability in a child. One has only to watch the rotogravure sections of the newspaper to see how widespread is the fallacy that the child with a remarkable memory for dates or an exceptional ability in rapid calculation is a mathematical genius; that the child with unusually nimble fingers is a budding Kreisler or Rachmaninoff;—and that the child with a good eye and a dexterous crayon is following in the steps of Michelangelo. These special abilities should by no means be discredited: if properly cultivated, they have a distinct commercial value, and a recognizable capacity for giving pleasure that is entirely legitimate. But they should never be confused with genius.

The true artist—whether he is expressing himself in his own medium or through the work of some great artist who has gone before him—is creative. From his own intellect—his ability to understand human nature, his observations, his powers of imagination—and from his own emotional experience—he puts symbolic life into inanimate clay, and sets free the life imprisoned in a page of music. Similarly the true mathematician is creative and must contribute far more than the ability to perform rapid calculations in order to comprehend the principles formulated by the world's physicists and astronomers or to contribute discoveries of his own.

But these intellectual and emotional capacities that

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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make of a talented individual a creative performer are not invariably associated with special ability. As Terman says, "Feeble-minded subjects can be found who rate above the average normal person in any one of these abilities" (music, drawing, painting, arithmetical computation, feats of memory, etc.).<sup>6</sup> And obviously, in the feeble-minded subject, such talents will never lead to great achievement. Terman, in the course of his study of a quarter of a million school children, including all grades and types of intellectual ability, made some special investigations of this type of case and concludes that "without superior general intelligence, special ability in music and art inevitably falls short of really great achievement."<sup>7</sup>

Special abilities unaccompanied by superior general intelligence are particularly misleading during adolescence, for during this brief period of blossoming, they are likely to show to best advantage. It is during adolescence that the young lad, inwardly rebelling against parental authority, may write a few English themes expressing genuine power, and the young girl, physically and mentally aware of a sweet (or fierce) new beauty within her may sing or play or dance as if genius had hitherto been latent within her. And some morning a boy or girl in the excitement of discovering the joy of an adolescent love, may be found much to his or her own surprise writing verses that seem to come of their own accord, and, indeed, cannot be kept from coming.

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<sup>6</sup> L. M. Terman, "Mentally Superior Children," Preliminary Report IV-C, of Division IV (Mental Development) of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, 1930, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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More often than not, in later life these young people not only do not fulfill their apparent promise of greatness, but are even unable to maintain the level they have already reached.

The very transiency of such powers, is, however, a great safeguard. Once they have gone, there is nothing left to do but bemoan their loss. The genuine and permanent special ability may, on the other hand, unless properly recognized, be a millstone around its possessor's neck all the rest of his life. For, if he is lacking superior general intelligence he is likely to be forever thwarted in his expectations, and yet, having built his entire life around this one ability, he may have incapacitated himself from living on the level of his general ability. He is chronically dissatisfied and unhappy; he fits nowhere; and often enough he is a burden not only to himself but to his family, friends and society at large.

The two errors most commonly made in regard to children having special abilities unaccompanied by superior intelligence are: first, to excuse all shortcomings and deficiencies because of (or, as due to) the special ability; and, second, to give the child an education, and training beyond his capacity for making use of them, and an outlook on life inconsistent with his limitations.

The first of these errors leads to some of the absurd personality deviations of the egocentric individual who allows himself all manner of eccentricities and rudeness because he is a genius.

*Lewis* was referred to the psychiatrist by the headmaster of his school because he did not seem to fit in with the other boys. He had no friends in the school and seemed to be an academic as well as social misfit, having

## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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been placed on the delinquency list for "idleness and lack of effort" in his work.

This boy prided himself on being queer, and delighted in calling attention to himself either by some absurd conduct of his own or by being the object of the crowd's persecution. He blatantly advertised the fact that he disliked the school and all school subjects with the possible exception of mathematics in which his work was consistently good. Both alone and in public he would be found making strange noises to himself and was usually unpleasant, as well as diffident, when approached by one of his instructors.

Lewis assumed the pose of being interested only in music. This interest had begun when he was only seven years old and was taking lessons from a rather mediocre teacher whom he soon outgrew. This experience made him feel that he really was a musical genius, and he spoke of looking forward to a career as a great pianist. He naturally regarded his "artistic temperament" as an adequate excuse for all his divergences from normal conduct, and by his irrational behavior lost the sympathy of such other boys in the school as were also interested in music. Although he was reluctant to admit it, he was really very lonely.

This boy's family, being determined to make a man of him, had tried to make him give up his music lessons, enter into athletics, and do a more creditable job in school. They had also tried to force him to join a party traveling abroad. But their efforts had come rather late and had been resented by the boy who, by the time he was referred to the psychiatrist, was out of harmony with practically every one.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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The error of training the child beyond his ability and incidentally unfitting him for a modest use of his limited gifts is even more serious in its consequences. The cultivation of the specious powers of one child is often made possible only at a sacrifice from the less glamorous but more worthy members of the family, and too often it is likely to unfit its subject for any other useful purpose without rendering him even self-supporting.

Dr. Lawrence Averill in his excellent and practical book *The Hygiene of Instruction* discussed various plans for special education for the gifted child, indicating that in recent years educators and educational psychologists have been endeavoring to provide educational opportunities that would meet the needs of the superior child, at least as well as the needs of the intellectually inferior child have until now been met.

He mentions first of all the simple plan of allowing the pupil to "skip a grade." The fact that by this method pupils were handicapped in the higher grades because of what they had skipped early in their school career, led to various modifications of this plan, such as semiannual and quarterly promotions and other forms of flexible grading hastening progress but reducing the amount of work skipped at any one time.

Other methods used by various cities to facilitate the progress of superior children are promotion by subject, sectioning of grades into two or more groups according to ability, extra work assigned the brighter children, special teachers to assist the brighter children, and special classes for gifted children. In addition to these methods of acceleration, various school systems have experimented with "out-and-out systems of individual instruction and promo-



## Intellectual Abilities and Disabilities

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tion in which every pupil is regarded and—theoretically, at least—handled as an individual.” These systems, among which the Winnetka plan and Dalton plan are perhaps the most widely known, break up classroom organization and recitations, and, in various original ways, allow each pupil to progress in his own special “unit” or “job” at his own rate of speed, at the same time providing opportunities for group activities and self-expression beyond those available in the more conventional school systems.

Averill’s general conclusion seems to be, however, that whatever the future may bring in the way of special provisions for the intellectually superior or gifted child, mere pushing ahead leads only to the child’s becoming “more maladjusted socially and physiologically with each year of gain,” whereas genuine enrichment of the course with adequate intellectual stimulation, due regard for health, reasonable provision for play, and the cultivation of a social aim, utilizing their special abilities and justifying their special training, will make not only for the greatest happiness of the gifted individual, but also for the greatest benefit to society.<sup>8</sup>

From the earliest times certain individuals by virtue of their special skills and superior abilities have been recognized as fitted for leadership. Although skill in hunting, fishing, and fighting may have been the principal attributes of the early leaders, such traits as courage, self-control, farsightedness, and diplomacy were undoubtedly factors entering into the selection.

The leaders of to-day are that small group of individ-

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<sup>8</sup> See Lawrence Averill, *The Hygiene of Instruction*, Chap. VII, pp. 136-64.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

uals who, by virtue of their superior intellectual equipments and their dominating personality traits, direct the affairs of the masses, and make for progress, whether in education, science, art, industry, recreation, or government.

To recognize these superior individuals early, and to provide as many as possible with such opportunities for mental development as will enable them to use their talents for the welfare of mankind, is one of the most important obligations society—and the educator in particular—has toward youth. It is essential, however, that these opportunities be directed toward the development and training of the individual as a whole, and not merely toward his intellectual processes. For unless the intellectually superior individual is also emotionally stable and physically sound, he cannot make the most of his powers; his usefulness to society will be correspondingly limited, and his own satisfaction and happiness will fall that much short of full measure.

## CHAPTER. V

### THE TOTAL PERSONALITY

**I**NASMUCH as the habits, personality traits and various behavior patterns used in man's everyday existence are in the process of development from the time of birth, and much of man's reflex activity is already well established in prenatal life, the bridge spanning the period between maturity and immaturity is a long one, and by no means represents a sudden transition in the life of the child. The journey is slow, the path invariably has many deviations, but it should be progressive, leading ultimately to the goal of mature adulthood.

Maturity can be measured at any given level and is always a relative state. The child can be quite as mature at seven as at twenty, if the limitations set by his mental and physical development are considered; and he can be looked upon as immature whenever he appears to be living on a plane obviously below his chronological age. Parents and teachers do not have to wait until a child reaches adolescence to determine whether or not his progress toward the goal is adequate. They have merely to apply different standards of measurement to determine his degree of maturity at different age levels.

During the child's second decade of life, society has, however, greater reason for being interested and concerned in the degree of maturity he has achieved, for he is beginning to be an individual of social significance. As

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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Dr. Miriam Van Waters has pointed out in her comprehensive discussion of "adolescence."<sup>1</sup> ". . . Physically and mentally the normal adolescent is capable of approximating the adult rôle, as he frequently does among primitive peoples and pioneer groups. . . . His immaturity comes to light in the more subtle phases of social life. He appears to be an adult yet he is not, and both primitive and civilized peoples have denied him complete political participation and have extended to adolescence some degree of immunity from adult legal and social responsibilities."

Adolescents themselves become interested in measuring their own and each other's progress toward maturity and they do so consciously or unconsciously in their neighborhood gang, in organized clubs or troops, and in their classes at school; certain boys or girls are excluded from the clique because they seem to be "Mama-babies," and others naturally assume leadership because they seem to be more grown-up. In the boarding school, with its system of clearly defined "forms," divisions, or classes, this process is artificially encouraged. The various manifestations of homesickness and frequent contacts with the infirmary in search of mothering, the pillow fights and other forms of rough-housing, the general irresponsibility toward classes and keeping appointments are all tolerated in the first form and all regarded as completely out of place in the fifth or sixth form. And pupils are not slow to make life miserable for those who do not measure up to standard.

What may be expected at the various age levels is of

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<sup>1</sup> Under this subject heading in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*.

## The Total Personality

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course not easy to determine. Dr. Gesell's valuable "normative summaries"<sup>2</sup> describing infant behavior development have not been paralleled for other age levels and there is no index showing at what age the adolescent may, for instance, be expected to take a spontaneous interest in the larger issues of life; to show a desire to be with members of the opposite sex; or to make independent selections in choosing clothes, activities, and friends.

Various activities of growing boys and girls have been studied with a view to determining the age at which interest and participation change from one level to another. Thus Furfey shows, in a diagram of an experimental group of pubescent boys, that although 100 per cent of the group were interested in scouting at the age of twelve years, less than 10 per cent were interested at the age of seventeen years, and none at the age of eighteen. He cites the case of a boy who at fifteen years of age was an enthusiastic member of a local Boy Scout troop, proud of his uniform, and working hard to become a "first-class" scout. Then, suddenly his interest began to fluctuate; he became less attentive and orderly at meetings, and began to object to wearing his uniform on the ground that it made him conspicuous. He still hung on, however, and, at the age of fifteen years and three months passed his map test. At the same time he began to spend more time with an older group of boys living in his block, and to assume a patronizing attitude toward the Scouts. At the age of fifteen years and four months he became a First Class Scout, but then continued to vacillate between participating in Scout activities and in the activities

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Gesell, *Infancy and Human Growth*, pp. 126ff.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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of the older boys, until at the age of fifteen and a half he had definitely left the Scouts and thrown in his lot with the older boys.<sup>3</sup>

Changes in reading interests, in games and similar activities, have also been studied in this way, but the results have not as yet led to anything of definite predictive value so far as the study of the individual adolescent is concerned.

It is doubtful whether there will ever be such an index for adolescent behavior as that for infant behavior, for as children advance in years their reactions to life and its varied situations depend largely upon their past experiences, growing out of environmental situations which are constantly changing, and never the same for any two individuals. Yet certain types of reactions have come to be generally regarded as acceptable and mature for the adolescent, and others as unacceptable and immature. This can best be illustrated by actual cases.

*Eugene* at the age of eighteen years was regarded by all his high school teachers as the most immature boy in the senior class.

Instances of his immaturity were cited as follows: His school work was of a low grade; his interests seemed to be characteristic of younger boys in that he was still actively interested in the Scouts and wore his Scout uniform to school; he made few friends among the boys in his class and was seen about much of the time alone; and he seemed immature in his lack of emotional control. He had, for example, cried and begged the principal not to report some minor school delinquency to his mother, and

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Hanley Furfey, *The Growing Boy*, p. 145.

## The Total Personality

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he was given to violent outbursts of temper, demonstrated on one occasion by his picking up a chair and smashing his radio, after hearing of a last minute touchdown in a tie football game.

Eugene had been born out West. When he was about ten years old, his parents had been divorced, and his mother had moved away with Eugene and his younger sister. The mother supplemented her alimony by carrying the sales agency for a line of drugs and toilet articles, and kept up a comfortable home and an automobile for this family of three.

Although Eugene had at times sold various products for premiums, he had not made even a gesture toward earning money after school hours. He excused his indolence on the grounds that he was unable to find the kind of job he wanted. He kept the yard and automobile clean, and occasionally helped with the dishes or making the beds, but there was no indication that he took any initiative, or thought of assuming any responsibility.

Eugene's mother was aware of her son's relative immaturity, without realizing just what the difficulty was. She thought that he had less initiative than her younger son, and that he resembled his father, but she was ambitious for him and seemed to think that by keeping after him, she could obtain the desired results.

Although this boy's mental equipment was rated as low average, it would appear that his activities, his choice of companions, his taste in books (he greatly enjoyed his small collection of boy scout and adventure books characteristic of the reading taste of the twelve-to fourteen-year-old), and his general attitude toward life, were on a level far below even his mental age. To be

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

sure, he had reached the senior year in high school, which was evidence of fair intellectual equipment, yet he would not have passed a test on social maturity on a fourteen-year-old level. Fully conscious of the disparity between what was expected of him and what he was doing, he played aimlessly about without any plan of life—unhappy and needlessly inefficient.

Possibly Eugene got a bad start in making the adjustment from rural to city life, for it sometimes seemed as if he were pining away for his earlier environment. Again, his trouble may have been due in part to too much mothering and the lack of contact with some one more resourceful in introducing disciplinary methods. It is certain that his immaturity was not really due to an intellectual limitation but to the fact that he was finding, on a low level, certain satisfactions for which he would have had to struggle if he had tried to meet life on a level in keeping with his years.

*Caroline* was a senior in college, and a good student. She had made herself very conspicuous by adopting noticeable mannerisms, posing, and availing herself of every opportunity to attract attention, and had lost the respect and good will of many of her fellow students. Her efforts to attract attention had begun with such dramatic attempts as keeping strange pet animals in her room, to the consternation of the other residents of the dormitory. The next year she had attempted something slightly more sophisticated, namely, announcing her engagement to a young newspaper man who was rather well known on campus. During her junior year she became much interested in telling people all about herself and her fancied problems, trying to gain their sympathy, and



## The Total Personality

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apparently seeking their advice; but it had soon become clear that again she was merely working for attention, for she gave little heed to the advice she received, and would take advantage of each new person available to her, to repeat the same performance. Her roommate of that year was said to have "slumped noticeably," both students and members of the faculty having observed that Caroline's influence on the girl was debilitating, enervating and generally poor. During Caroline's senior year she used such simple devices as appearing late at meals, and making extraordinary remarks at table in order to attract attention.

This young woman was referred to the psychiatrist for help in overcoming her unpleasant desire for attention. The first thing that was learned about her was that she had had an unusually close relation with her mother, a widow with sufficient means to enable her to indulge the girl in most of the luxuries of life and keep her closely by her side both at home and while traveling.

Caroline experienced a feeling of insufficiency and inadequacy when she was put on her own in college and no longer found herself the most important individual in her immediate environment. Although she realized the desirability of becoming independent of her mother, and frankly tried to free herself, she tried at the same time to satisfy her craving for attention in some other way. There was also the factor that she had come from a dull, small town and was in some respects trying to compensate for the experiences enjoyed by girls coming from a richer background.

Caroline had several conferences with the psychiatrist, in the course of which an effort was made to help her find

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

the reason for her various undesirable forms of behavior, and to find a satisfactory solution. She improved noticeably during the remainder of the year, and became so interested in the field of personality adjustment that she took a postgraduate course in this work, and now has a position in which she does investigations of children with behavior problems, carrying on her work in an entirely satisfactory manner.

*Marguerite* was one of five girls in a family socially and financially well situated. At the age of twenty, she was taking, in a casual sort of way, a university course in household arts and causing much concern because she seemed "immature," and "lacking in a philosophy of life."

According to the mother's description, *Marguerite* was "an average, nice, pretty, good-natured girl" who had however, "not yet reached her own level"; she had a good mind but was too lazy to use it, and, being very self-centered, she naturally had no interest in the big issues of life; she was easily influenced, immature in her opinions, and, in general, purposeless; she pretended to hate art and music, and this her mother regarded as a pose; she smoked and drank "some," loved dancing, rebelled against chaperonage and early hours, and enjoyed reading, as well as telling, "snappy stories." She was a good sport, level-headed in emergencies, immaculate about her personal appearance, a good athlete, and fond of children. But on the whole, she seemed to be "going blind-folded through a life of possibilities for those who would but see."

At the end of a detailed description of her daughter's "positive and negative characteristics" this mother added the following paragraph: "*Marguerite* considers herself

## The Total Personality

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'as good as engaged.' I am endeavoring to make her see, without antagonizing her, that long engagements are not very advisable. She had known the boy about three or four months. I saw him just once and he left no impression on me, but then so many boys come to our house. Two months ago she was raving about this boy's friend. Now she is openly wearing this boy's fraternity pin and talking about him to every one. To me it looks more like a pride in conquest than a truly deep love."

Marguerite, at twenty, was still fluttering about on surface emotions, deriving adequate satisfaction for her emotional needs in building around herself an artificial halo of smartness, and, in her egocentricity, even her engagement seemed but another effort to make herself appear to be an interesting and popular girl. At the age of twenty, Marguerite should have outgrown such an immature attitude; she should have been more interested in the world outside herself; she should have looked upon an engagement as a relationship preceding marriage, and regarded marriage itself as a serious relationship, one involving the happiness of some one else besides herself. Her mother had apparently not succeeded in helping her daughter to attain this more mature outlook on life and was the more disappointed inasmuch as she looked upon her own life as "rich and full to overflowing."

But, as was indicated earlier, parents need not wait until a child approaches adulthood before measuring his maturity. Evidence of failure to live up to the chronological age may be observed early in the child's life, as it was, for example, in the case of Kenneth.

*Kenneth*, aged eight, lived at home with his mother

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

and his little four-year-old sister. For two years his father had been living "with some one else." Kenneth was devoted to him, in spite of the fact that he saw him very infrequently. His mother's direction and oversolicitude he resented, calling it "petticoat government." Her tendency to put him in a glass case, and to be oversolicitous about him, had probably arisen through her anxiety over his congenital heart condition, and her attempt to find in him an outlet for her emotions.

In school, Kenneth, without being particularly bad, gave a great deal of trouble by demanding much attention. The principal wrote of him as follows:

Kenneth is an eager and interesting little boy who suffers from delicate babyhood, and from the fact that his father no longer lives at home. . . . His principal interest is in Africa, where he tells us he means to go, as soon as he grows up, to fight wild animals. He has often said that he wants to fight something, and, while he is badly afraid of the older boys, he is continually teasing the younger ones, hoping, as he puts it, to get them really mad so he can fight them. At times he is a perfectly charming little fellow, and at other times he seems moody, though I suspect this may be mainly a part of his tendency to play to the gallery, and his lack of understanding how to be coöperative. He does not like athletics, and has not learned how to play with other children. He has no great friends in the class, though most of his classmates, especially the younger ones, stand in awe of him.

Although Kenneth's I.Q. is only 108, he is doing very interesting work in English and especially geography, where his keen interest in travel, particularly in Africa, makes him an interesting and capable pupil. The music teacher has succeeded in winning him through his real music appreciation, and he does good work with clay and in carpentry in his handwork periods.

## The Total Personality

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The "room-teacher" seems to have no difficulty in handling Kenneth. It is at lunch and play periods that he becomes unmanageable, and, although we feel that great progress has been made, we are far from satisfied with conditions as they are. . . .

In his interview with the psychiatrist, Kenneth was extremely nonchalant. He described his achievements, his relation to his mother and to his school companions, his interests, and his personality traits with equal assurance. He had an exaggerated opinion of his own importance in relation to his family, but had good insight into his limitations in fitting in socially with the group. He felt very deeply the loss of his father, both because of his affection for him, and because he was subjected to humiliating situations in trying to explain why he was not at home. He was very resentful toward any friends his mother had in the home, looking upon them as intruders usurping his father's place.

He had been taught to build his life around his "delicate childhood" and was never allowed to forget that once he had had a weak heart. Consequently at the age of eight years he was already using illness as a means of escaping from the unpleasant things in life. He found it easier in his phantasy life to fight lions in Africa than to meet courageously his eight-year-old schoolmates on the playground.

This boy was being denied the opportunity of reaching his goal of maturity by a well-meaning but unhappy, poorly-adjusted mother, who was unable to meet her problems in life satisfactorily, and who now unconsciously was preparing the boy for a similar experience.

A plan was outlined and carried out whereby the boy

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

was placed in camp, and given a chance immediately to meet some of his problems in life unhampered, and the mother was given a series of talks on the necessity of emancipating herself from her dependence upon her boy.

Being mature means that the individual has approached his highest potential development physically, intellectually and emotionally for any given age level, and that his various "selves" are operating harmoniously to the advantage of the organism as a whole, resulting in what Burnham terms the "integrated personality."<sup>4</sup>

One must keep in mind that the individual functions from birth in an environment which includes other individuals, and that as soon as two or more are gathered together, obligations and responsibilities begin. Herein lies the test of maturity.

It would be no test of an automobile to try it out on the floor of the salesroom. Its speed can only be tested on the highway; its pulling power on the hills, its riding qualities on rough roads; and only time will determine its durability. The same is true in dealing with human beings. It requires varied environments for these specific tests: the school for intellectual ability; the athletic field for physical strength and skill; personal contacts for emotional stability; and time for the individual as a whole.

It goes without saying that the efficiency and life of the car depend not only upon the service required of it, but also upon the care it is given, and the heed with which it is driven. Without gas, water and oil, trouble of an im-

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<sup>4</sup> William H. Burnham, *The Normal Mind*, p. 56.

## The Total Personality

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mediate and emergent nature cannot be avoided. One may, however, run for many miles with a slipping clutch, poor brakes, and weak batteries, without encountering any immediate difficulty, although the danger increases the longer these defects are neglected.

So human beings without food, drink and proper elimination will run into immediate difficulty. They may, however, carry on for a considerable time, refusing to recognize that they are worrying too much, sleeping too little, and getting too little exercise; yet they are headed for trouble just as surely as the car with the worthless brakes.

Although the maturity of the individual can only be judged in relation to the particular problems he has had to meet, there is a certain uniformity in the type of situation with which most individuals are confronted: The relation between child and parent, recognition of authority, adjustment to sex, finding the right vocation, marriage, the death of close relatives—these are all problems which are common to most individuals. Yet the degree of wisdom and stability with which the individual meets these situations is the real test of his maturity.

The stress of meeting a life situation is determined by two things: One's preparedness for meeting it, and the nature of the situation itself. An individual may, for example, have acquired that degree of maturity which would have prepared him to meet, adequately, any of the stressful situations in life had they occurred singly, or perhaps all of them, had they been scattered through the life cycle; but if an unhappy marriage were followed by severe financial reverses and the death of a much-loved parent, all in rapid succession, he may well find the situa-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

tion in its totality too stressful, although he could have met adequately any one of his problems encountered alone.

There is a breaking point in the stability of every individual. Fortunately most people are never subjected to the physical and mental strain which determines this point. When it is reached, however, the organism fails to function, and only the most mature and adequate can successfully meet the task of reintegration.

Ordinarily, most of the situations just mentioned do not have to be met by the individual until after the second decade of his life. During adolescence, the situation most commonly confronting boys and girls is the necessity for proving their ability to live, independent of parental supervision. They must demonstrate that they are capable of taking care of themselves, and behaving as responsible individuals, both at home and away from home, without constant attention, advice, and admonition from their parents.

Physical fitness is of no greater importance than self-reliance in a world where competition is keen, where success is likely to be interpreted in terms of fame and material acquisition, and where the feelings of sentimental and sensitive people are likely to be ignored, hurt, and even ridiculed. In the struggle for security, attention and power, human beings are likely to be thoughtless, and at times ruthless and cruel to the weaklings, and those in whom self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-assertiveness are not sufficiently dominant, will be overwhelmed by the lack of kindly consideration that is found in our present-day existence, whether it be in the industrial, social, or educational competition of life.



## The Total Personality

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The closer the individual approaches to adulthood, the greater are society's demands on him, and the same degree of overdependence which would be considered merely undesirable in the young child, is frowned upon in the adolescent. Furthermore, in adolescence the child is usually extending his personal contacts beyond the immediate, rather tolerant and protecting environment of his home and the elementary school, to the world outside. Whether his new contacts are made in high school, business college, part or full-time jobs, organized sports, gangs, Scout troops, summer camps, clubs, social and religious organizations, community activities, volunteer work, or whatever else his environment offers, he will find himself accepted as an individual capable of standing on his own feet, of assuming a certain amount of responsibility, and of meeting definite obligations, and, in general, able to manage himself with only the aid of a few pertinent suggestions and limited guidance. And finally, the normal adolescent is likely to be experiencing within himself a perhaps still inarticulate but nevertheless increasing desire for independence. He may not be conscious of a well-formulated desire for freedom of thought and action, but in countless ways he shows this desire in his effort to decide things for himself, and not infrequently he experiences a continuous series of conflicts with those who wish to manage his affairs, the latter being chiefly his own family. Often even if his parents have forced him to become independent in some respects, they have quite inconsistently kept him dependent in other respects; thus, for example, parents who send their adolescent boys and girls out to work may oblige them to become economically independent, but may, at the same time, keep them so-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

cially, intellectually, and emotionally dependent, by dictating and requiring detailed accounts of all their activities, imposing upon them with equal firmness their hour for going to bed, their religious faith, and their choice of friends.

This constant dictating not infrequently leads to a child's being evasive or rebellious, as may be seen from this description of Ralph:

When *Ralph* was fourteen years old, he became so difficult to manage and so impossible to discipline that his parents sought assistance in handling this "problem of adolescence." They complained that he was selfish and thoughtless; that he always wanted his own way; that he was reckless with his money, and would not give satisfactory answers when questioned as to his activities; that he was quick-tempered, very sensitive to criticism, and tempestuous when contradicted; and above all that he could not stand authority.

Separate conferences with the parents and the boy soon revealed that Ralph was completely surrounded by rules and regulations. Ralph's father was a stern, severe man, who would point out to his son that the laws of the church and the state had placed him in a position of disciplinary authority over his children and that it was the duty of the latter to obey him. His only contacts were made with the boy when criticism and discipline seemed to be needed, and Ralph had quite naturally concluded that his father had little interest or affection for him as an individual.

In a conference with both parents and the boy, it was pointed out that in their efforts to enforce too many rules and regulations and to attain an ideal type of conduct regarding relatively unimportant details of the

## The Total Personality

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boy's daily routine, the parents were building up in the boy a spirit of resentment against all rules and regulations and all authority, which would soon become a part of his personality make-up and extend outside the home. It was suggested that by sacrificing some of their rules about unimportant matters, they would get better coöperation from him in the remaining ones. Ralph was given a talk on the need for a certain amount of authority in maintaining order in the home, the school, the community, and society at large, and an effort was made to change his attitude towards authority.

It was suggested that for the moment at least the parents should concentrate on making this boy happy rather than efficient, and that many of the rules and regulations about the relatively unimportant details of life be disregarded and only those pertaining to fundamental principles be enforced. It was agreed that the system under which this household had been operating had not been successful, and that both parents and child were wrangling and arguing when together. The struggle for efficiency through the disciplinary methods had not worked out well for the parents or for the boy.

Ralph entered into a "gentleman's agreement" to coöperate. He agreed that his parents were anxious to do all they could for him, but he was dead set against their system. Intellectually, he appreciated the necessity for being more responsible about his expenditures of money, but he wanted to spend what was agreed to be his allowance in his own way. He wanted to be allowed to tell his parents of his free will where he had been and what he had done and not be put through a third degree on every occasion. In other words, he resented the constant

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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supervision and questioning rather than the doing of the chore or giving the information.

Ralph had his ups and downs; so did the family. At the end of six months, however, he was a happier, more efficient and reliable boy than the family had hoped for, and the parents had a broader vision of the whole task of guiding and directing the life of this youth.

Resentfulness and rebelliousness are often manifested in an apparent personal dislike and hatred of child for parent. It is not uncommon for a mother to come to the psychiatrist complaining that her young daughter seems to "hate" her, when in reality the daughter is hating the fact that the mother is prolonging her authority beyond its reasonable limits and forcing an intimacy without proper justification.

*Felicia* and Tommy were the only two children in the family. Felicia was twelve and one-half years old and Tommy was three. Their father and mother, aged forty-four and forty respectively, had always been happy together and were fond of both children. The family were economically comfortable, had an attractive home, and kept a maid and a cook. But Felicia could not get on with her family, "hated" her mother, was jealous of all attention given to Tommy, and was almost continuously unhappy.

The mother reported that Felicia had always been a difficult child. Long before going to school, she had been finicky about her food, had sometimes cried out in panicky fear at night, and had had temper tantrums. She had grown up to be very selfish, wanting things her own way and showing resentment when she could not have

## The Total Personality

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them. She would be most insistent in demanding or persistent in begging for whatever she wanted, and if her request was refused, she would make the family miserable by enumerating all past grievances; yet when she did get what she wanted, she seemed quite indifferent, taking their concessions very much for granted, and never showing any gratitude.

Felicia was in the eighth grade, and did very good work in school. She got along well with the other children and with her teacher so long as they did not endeavor to exercise too much authority over her. It was reported, however, that she would complain to the other children of being much abused by her mother.

At camp she did not get on so well, but this was largely due to the fact that she wanted to demonstrate that her mother had been wrong in sending her against her will. She had refused to say good-by to her mother before leaving for camp, and her letters, while there, would frequently consist of only three words: "I hate you."

The conflict with her mother was naturally a source of great pain to the latter. Felicia was very affectionate toward her father and even toward the cook, but she treated her mother with what seemed to be contempt, telling stories of her mother's meanness, and accusing her of all sorts of cruelties. The mother was hurt, too, at Felicia's secretiveness about herself. Her daughter never confided in her and would usually refuse to tell about the most casual experiences of the day when asked. She did not want her mother to know anything about her friendships, successes or failures, and even tried to conceal from her the fact that she had begun to menstruate.

This case was not studied and the underlying forces

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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which created the rebellious, resentful, and in many respects, cruel attitude of Felicia toward her mother, were not revealed. Undoubtedly it was all closely associated with the primitive satisfaction that is obtained from inflicting pain and having power over others. The individual who fails to get out of life that "something" which contributes to happiness, self-esteem and self-confidence in the ordinary, everyday activities, often resorts unconsciously to conduct and attitudes that are extremely baffling to understand.

It is often difficult to trace the origin of these intense dislikes between mother and daughter. Sometimes they seem to be due to an extreme difference in temperament, the mother being unable to understand why her daughter should not resemble her, and the daughter resenting the fact that she should be expected to be patterned after her mother. Sometimes the feeling seems to be due to a disparity in their interests, or their social ambitions or their intellectual capacity, the daughter again resenting her mother's limitations or superiority in these matters. But even under such circumstances it is possible for mother and daughter to arrive at equable relations if each respects the other's interests and capacities, and the mother does not insist on directing every activity, knowing every thought, and forcing intimacy at times when the daughter desires privacy. Mothers at times fail to realize that it is the poverty of their own lives, and the lack of absorbing interests, that leads them to crave active participation in the lives of their daughters and often their sons. It is certainly true that mothers who do live full and interesting lives and are able to fit into their household routines

## The Total Personality

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some form of community service, club work, church work, a genuine vocation, or engrossing hobby, are not only happier themselves, but happier in their relations with the other members of their family. In the following case, Janice's mother attributed much of the domestic happiness to the fact that she was busy and interested in her music.

*Janice* was fifteen years old and a sophomore in high school. She had two brothers—one thirteen and one eleven. Her father was superintendent of schools in the mill town in which they lived. Her mother, who had been a locally well-known music teacher before her marriage, had gradually resumed her teaching after the children were no longer babies, and had a large number of pupils coming for lessons to the little studio in her home. The family had no full-time servants; a woman came in twice a week to do laundry work and cleaning, and the rest of the work was done by Janice's mother with the assistance of the children.

Janice and her mother stand out in striking contrast to Felicia and her mother. Janice's mother is so busy with her music lessons and so much interested in her own activities that she has never been particularly conscious of the degree of confidence or "closeness" existing between her daughter and herself. She is fond of Janice, and interested in all she does; she and her husband make a point of meeting all the boys and girls who come to their home, and have set an arbitrary limit on the number of evenings a week which Janice may spend away from home, and the hour by which she must be in. But in this mother's opinion the adolescent girl is naturally on closer terms with girls of her own age, than with any adult, even her

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

mother, and so she neither tries to force herself into her daughter's confidence, nor does she complain when Janice excludes her from the intimacy which she shares with her best school friend. She has never been aware of any feeling of coldness or even indifference from her daughter. They seem to go along each in her own way, living together on pleasant and friendly terms, without either ever interfering much with the other. This does not mean that Janice can do as she pleases, or that she is unsupervised; nor does it mean that she is selfish and thoughtless, for, if the family budget can afford but one new spring coat she is willing that her mother be the one to have it. Like her mother she has engrossing interests which keep her from dwelling unduly on personal relations with her family, and although her chief interest and ambition lies in the field of journalism rather than music, she and her mother take a courteous and genuine interest in each other's activities.

It is true that many adolescents never show signs of resentment or rebellion or any desire for independence. They may, on the contrary, seem to cling to their homes and their parents more than ever before. These individuals are, for one reason or another, not yet ready to grow up, and, indeed, some of them never do quite grow up.

In one of the reports of the 1931 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, the statement was made that every child has two fundamental needs, namely, the need for security and the need for development. All things that contribute to the child's feeling of being wanted and cared for—his food and clothing, his home



## The Total Personality

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and bed, the attention, interest and affection of his parents—help to give him his needed sense of security; and all things that help enable him to grow healthy and independent in body and intellect, in his emotions, and in his relations with people, contribute to his development. Thus it happens that during the child's early years the efforts of the parents are directed mainly toward meeting his need for security, whereas during adolescence their emphasis is likely to be placed on meeting his need for development.

Among the reasons why some adolescents have no desire to become independent or grown up, there is first of all the reason that the child's need for security may not have been adequately met in his early life, so that he continues to crave security rather than an opportunity for development.

*Evangeline* was an only child. Her parents were rather pleasure-loving young people who enjoyed moving about, and accordingly arranged their lives to enable them to do the things in which they were most interested. Her father was anxious to do what he could for her, and her mother was fond of her, but they found it more convenient to express this affection by sending their daughter off to boarding school for most of the year, and to summer camps for the remaining time. The father was an invalid and used his lameness as further reason for demanding all of the mother's time and attention. Their occasional visits to or from *Evangeline*, and their correspondence was not enough to satisfy the girl's need for parental attention, and so, by the time she had reached fifteen, she was still craving attention and affection from her mother.

The head of the boarding school reported that although

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

Evangeline was popular with her fellow students, got on well with older people, and seemed fairly happy in school, she complained of sleeplessness, lack of appetite and loss of weight; she had also heard that after "lights out" Evangeline used a small light in her room in order to write home, and that she made considerable show of checking off the passing of each day on three calendars which she kept in her room.

Evangeline had a normal interest in games, sports, dancing, music, and the theater. She had not yet made any contact with boys. She admitted that she loved school but explained that her feelings were either "way up or way down" and that she frequently felt morbid, and wanted to be with her family.

At Christmas time, when she was in the ninth grade, she decided that she would not allow her family to dispose of her any longer by sending her off to boarding school; she would remain at home in spite of all their efforts to make other plans. . . .

Evangeline was, however, sufficiently mature so that in talking the situation over she could see for herself the desirability of becoming independent of her family, and of growing up in her attitude toward her school and life in general. The first week in January found her back in class, and in February it was reported that she was happier in school than she had ever been before. She was making a real effort to emancipate herself from her family with great promise of success.

Evangeline had been tossed about so much and had been at home so little that her need for security, for a sense of belonging to some one, had not been satisfied, and she still craved from her mother the attention and

## The Total Personality

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close affection ordinarily desired only by the young child. In other words, although her needs for physical security had been met, her need for emotional security remained unsatisfied.

On the other hand, the adolescent who has been brought up with too much security, who has always had all his wants ministered to by anxious, solicitous, or adoring parents, and has grown so accustomed to being surrounded with affectionate attention that he feels utterly lost outside his environment, may manifest a very similar unwillingness to become independent. The story of Nancy, who was referred to the psychiatrist when she was fourteen years old, well illustrates this type of situation.

*Nancy*, like *Evangeline*, was an only child, and was also sent to a private boarding school. She had always been very dependent upon her mother. At twelve years of age she had been sent away to a summer camp, only to come back again at the end of ten days, too homesick to remain longer. The following summer she was sent again with no better results.

Nancy was fourteen when she started off for boarding school. Like *Evangeline*, she got on well with the other girls, made friends easily, and seemed to be well liked. But she had grown so accustomed to the constant solicitude and innumerable little attentions of her mother—her good-night kiss, her suggestions about her clothes, her special considerations at mealtime, her anxiety over each little physical complaint, and her endearments—that she felt utterly lost away from her. Nancy wrote daily letters home, overflowing with sentimentality, and despite her desire to remain in school she found the task

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

of trying to live her life both at school and at home a little too much for her. She became weepy and hysterical and cried steadily during the night until at last she was sent home.

Another situation in which the adolescent is likely to remain dependent is the home in which one parent is a stern disciplinarian, and the other acts as a mediator between him and the child. It is often the father who is severe, stern, and strict and the mother who is lenient, fighting all the child's battles with the father, and trying to offset the father's severity with her indulgence. Without ever figuring out the exact nature of his relationship to his parents the child may come to look upon his father as the source of all troubles and difficulties and his mother as the source of all defense, protection, and comfort. Even when he gets into a situation where there are other sources of difficulty, as, for instance school companions, room-mates, and dormitory masters, he may still look upon his mother as the only person who can defend, protect, and comfort him.

*Gordon's* father was a lawyer with a stern, rigid, and a domineering manner. His mother was a meek, gentle person and very solicitous over her son. *Gordon* had no sisters or brothers. He grew up with a very strong attachment to his mother and was extremely unhappy and homesick when away from her.

At the age of fourteen, he was sent to a boarding school. He ran away after two weeks, was returned, and then ran away again. He wanted to be back with his mother, and, in the end, she allowed him to stay at home and attend a day school. His father was thoroughly dis-

## The Total Personality

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appointed in him, calling him spineless, and a weakling and coward.

When Gordon was fifteen he was again sent to a boarding school, this time to a school within an hour's ride from his home. But even this was too far away. He would telephone to his mother four and five times a day, begging her to let him come home, and creating highly dramatic scenes whenever he did get home. His mother finally called in a psychiatrist for help in handling this situation. It was quite characteristic of Gordon's behavior at this time that, after coming to the psychiatrist for a long talk on his need for growing independent from his mother, he should have left the doctor's office courageously starting out for school, only to stop at home on the way in order to have one more tearful and stormy scene with his mother.

On returning to school he became utterly despondent, and in his despair, unable to appeal to his mother who seemed to be in league with "the doctor," he wrote the most pathetic letters begging for release from his torment resulting from being kept in school.

Gordon was taken out of the school, but instead of being allowed to live at home, he was sent to another town where arrangements were made for him to go to school and board in a private home. In this way he was still allowed to enjoy some of the security of home life, and yet was definitely removed from immediate contact with his mother. His periods of homesickness grew less frequent and less intense, and eventually he was able to enter a boys' school and live happily among other boys, learning to hold his own without the intervention, consolation, or protection of his mother.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

In dealing with these emotional children, it is well to keep in mind that sheer force and stern discipline avail nothing. They must be prepared to meet their responsibilities, and various steps are usually necessary before they are actually living on the desired social plane and meeting life in an adequate way. One need not be afraid of compromise, if it is a part of a well thought out plan which considers the future welfare of the child.

One of the most important ways of helping the adolescent to become independent is in connection with the spending of money. Whether he is working on a full-time job and receiving a living wage, or working on a part-time job and earning anywhere from mere pocket money to enough to support him, or whether he is earning nothing at all, this need is the same. The normal adolescent does not enjoy asking his parents for every dime to be spent on carfares, every quarter for lunch, and every half-dollar for a haircut. Whether this money is to come from his own earnings (in case he turns these over to his parents), from his father's pocket, or from his mother's purse, it should undoubtedly be given to him in the form of an allowance.

Just how large the adolescent's allowance should be depends on his needs. If he must ride to and from school or work on the trolley each day and buy his noon lunches, his allowance must obviously be larger than if he is within walking distance and comes home for lunch. If the girl's clothes are purchased on the family charge accounts or made by the family dressmaker, the allowance can be much smaller than if she must purchase and pay for them herself. If the boy or girl leave home to attend school elsewhere, the size of the allowance will be determined

## The Total Personality

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by whether it must cover all expenses or whether bills for some of these may be sent home.

The actual amount of an allowance will in any event depend on the family resources and standard of living, and can, therefore, not be discussed to great advantage, but the question of the type of expenditures which the allowance must cover is worthy of serious consideration on the part of the parents.

The parent can make a real contribution to the permanent satisfactions of the child, by helping him acquire habits and attitudes toward life which will tend to make him self-reliant, and to depend upon himself to a large degree for his pleasure and satisfactions in life. Much unhappiness and dissatisfaction is brought about by not knowing what one wants,—more perhaps than being denied what one may desire. It was a very wise man who said, "If thou wilt make a man happy, add not to his wealth but take away from his desires."

There is a wealth of inexpensive pleasures available for the youth who has been adequately trained. One is, of course, more or less dependent upon the environment in which one lives, but if the faculties at hand are utilized, children will not be without interests if they have developed their own resources to the fullest extent. The excellent quality of even our rural libraries makes good reading always available, and the youth who has learned the pleasure and companionship of books, and has acquired the habit of turning to them for study as well as for recreation has found one source of companionship and pleasure that will never fail him.

Children, both boys and girls, will find that hand work of a constructive nature, not only develops a high degree

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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of motor coördination but is a real asset for pleasant and profitable pastime. Building boats; making models and whistles with the old jackknife; building radios from material gathered up at the five-and-ten-cent store little by little as finances permit; sewing; drawing; painting and experimenting with photography,—these are just a few hobbies that may be cultivated with both profit and pleasure. Athletics in some form or other are always available; swimming either in the open or at some club, or Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A. is a most useful and healthy exercise.

Skating in the winter in northern climates, or on rinks, bowling, squash, tennis, are desirable sports because one can keep them up even in late adult life.

The organized group games for youth have most of the advantages already mentioned, besides developing in the individual the spirit of teamwork which is so essential all through life, and every child should be encouraged to participate in these various activities if there is no physical handicap to contraindicate. Even for those with some physical impairment, some modification of athletic pastime can be worked out.

In every metropolis and every country village, there are unlimited opportunities for the boy with a venture-some spirit to satisfy his wanderlust by explorations. These trips should be encouraged by parents. Not only are they of value educationally, but they develop a sense of independence and self-reliance, stimulate and satisfy curiosity, broaden one's vision on life, and for many fulfill a need that nothing else can do quite as well.

Young people find "collecting" a way of satisfying the acquisitive yearning, and from the early beginnings of



## The Total Personality

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gathering up cigarette boxes, bottle caps, and jackknives, they go on to stamps, leaves, butterflies, books, pictures, and antiques. Here again a lifelong interest may be developed by simple beginnings which are useful at the start as means of utilizing unemployed time, and giving a real interest and occupation where boredom and mischief well might have resulted.

Any program of youth that does not include a definite, well-planned outline of work, is woefully weak. In so far as possible, it is well for youth to have certain obligations in the household, for which he is compensated by his care, food, clothing and other necessities, and such an allowance as is in keeping with the family budget and his needs. Besides this participation in the household activities, a portion of the long vacation should be spent working for some one outside the family, where he will be entirely on his own, and directly responsible to his employer. There is no better way to help young people get an idea of money values, and what is expected at any age period than to have them toil for their own money. The arrangements in these outside business deals are free from the emotional entanglements that are so frequently introduced when working for family, that one gets an entirely different point of view regarding the obligations of the employee to employer. This point of view is of great value in later life.

As the child advances in years, he should assume certain responsibilities and receive in turn certain privileges demonstrating his progress toward maturity. Among his privileges none is more important than that of being considered an individual with a personality all his own, but this should bring with it the responsibility of con-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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sidering the personalities of other people—first of all of his parents.

The parent himself must teach the child to assume these obligations, just as he must teach the child to be honest and obedient. But he need not feel that he is being unduly selfish or attaching too much importance to his own ego, for, if he handles the situation wisely, he is helping the child to develop ways and means with which to make an adult approach toward life, to respect the rights of others, just as his own rights have been respected by his elders.

As a part of this process, parents should not demand respect or confidence merely on the basis of either their greater age, or their authority as parents; rather, they should expect to receive admiration and confidence only in so far as they have demonstrated that from their greater experience they have derived a certain amount of wisdom, or that by virtue of certain special talents, training, or persistent effort they do indeed excel in certain respects: *e.g.*, in their profession, sports, or hobbies, as well as in judgment.

The struggle for *intellectual* independence is, for those adolescents who make it, the most difficult and most painful part of growing up. Both fiction and biography contain exhaustive and tragic records of adolescents, who suddenly find that systems of thought to which their parents are violently opposed—whether on questions of religion, economics, politics, education, human relations, science, or theories of the moment—are supported by men and women whose outlook on life is more agreeable to them, or whose intellectual acumen and integrity they are obliged to regard more highly than the authoritative

## The Total Personality

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wisdom of their parents. Even more disturbing is the discovery that all their own thinking is leading them farther and farther away from the views accepted by their family as the only right views.

The first page of Edmund Gosse's book *Father and Son* might have been written of countless parents and children.

This book is the record of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs. It ended, as was inevitable, in disruption. Of the two human beings here described, one was born to fly backward, the other could not help being carried forward. There came a time when neither spoke the same language as the other, or encompassed the same hopes, or was fortified by the same desires. But, at least, it is some consolation to the survivor, that neither, to the very last hour, ceased to respect the other, or to regard him with a sad indulgence. The affection of these two persons was assailed by forces, in comparison with which the changes that health or fortune or place introduce are as nothing. It is a mournful satisfaction, but yet a satisfaction, that they were both of them able to obey the law which says that ties of close family relationship must be honoured and sustained. Had it not been so, this story would never have been told.<sup>5</sup>

So far as the parent and child relation is concerned, this struggle usually resolves itself to some practical issue. The adolescent no longer believes the doctrines preached in the family church and refuses to become a member or attend the services; or he believes in the desirability of a classical education and insists on going to college, despite a parental conviction that higher education unfits young people for meeting the practical de-

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<sup>5</sup> Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*, p. 1.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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mands of life; or he may wish to include among his friends and bring to his home, boys and girls whose race, religion, nationality, economic or social status are daily denounced by his parents.

The struggle may be just as bitter, and just as disrupting to the harmony of the family life and to the bond between child and parent, when no practical issues are involved—when the struggle is purely intellectual. Thus an adolescent may be struggling for an independent point of view when he declares himself a socialist in the democratic dining-room; or a girl begins to argue in favor of birth control in a home in which the very discussion of such a subject is taboo; or when a child of prosaic parents professes a keen interest in poetry or drama in a home in which poetry and drama are looked upon as useless and effeminate—if not, indeed, immoral—forms of literature.

Even when lack of opposition and interest on the part of parents precludes the possibility of an argument between parents and child, there may be a very real struggle for intellectual independence. The adolescent may be struggling in the world of other people's thoughts, in an effort to reach a system of thought and philosophy of life that he might call his own.

Throughout, it has been stressed that the aspect of mental life that has to do with our feelings and emotions, registering our sense of well-being, and measuring for us the worthwhileness of existence, obviously plays an even greater part in our lives than does either the intellectual or the physical part of us. The fact that no satisfactory tests have yet been devised for measuring emotional development or evaluating degrees and kinds of emotional

## The Total Personality

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experiences, makes these feelings within us no less potent as disturbing factors in our lives.

Sound physical system and good intellectual equipment are not adequate assurance of efficient functioning if the emotional life of the individual is characterized by instability. Nor does the emotional life function independently of the intellectual or physical. They are all interdependent one upon the other. If the physiology of the body is altered in some way the emotions are affected; if the individual is subjected to emotional stress and strain, physiological activity is affected, and these changes are all revealed in various ways.

The student who is worried and anxious cannot do intellectual tasks as well as the one who is calm and placid. Food, drink, sleep, and exercise affect not only one's physical vigor but also one's feeling tone toward life, and so the individual as a living unified organism is affected by anything that affects any part of him whether it be his body, his intellect, or his emotions.

The emotional responses to life are in evidence even before intellect as such can be demonstrated, and in illness and those diseases affecting the brain, alterations in the emotions may be the earliest symptom that the organism is not functioning properly. The child by its cry indicates whether he is hungry, in pain, or frightened. By his laugh he indicates satisfaction from the physical stimulation of being fed, petted or amused. These are the earliest and simplest types of emotional expression, and are followed by emotions of anger, fear, and pleasure with reference to people and things; and still later on the more complex emotions of love, hatred, and jealousy appear, dependent upon the inherent emotional make-up

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

of the child and the nature of the environment to which he is subjected. All these varied feeling tones toward life are well developed long before the time he reaches adolescence.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are no new emotions with which the adolescent has to deal, there is considerable evidence indicating that many of those already present become intensified, and are more easily stimulated. This sensitivity may well be due to the increased activity of the various glands of internal secretion, particularly those having to do with the sex life of the individual. It has long been recognized in medicine that the secretions from other glands such as the thyroid, pituitary and adrenal glands are all closely related to one's emotional tone toward life.

There is no way of measuring these emotional responses. They can be properly evaluated only when considered in relation to the personality of the individual by whom they are being experienced. In a very general way, one is impressed by the adolescent phase as a state of mild intoxication, characterized by a feeling of well-being, and varying degrees of restlessness and activity, much of which appears purposeless to the parent. There is an urge toward independence, and as one stands on the side lines and watches the procession pass, one may be annoyed by what appears to be a new-found sense of self-sufficiency. They strut about flaunting the exuberance of youth in our faces. They are a little more self-assertive and argumentative. There is an attitude which demands attention—perhaps a touch of defiance. We, as adults, are fearful of these new and untried innovations. In fact, anything that deviates from the custom

## The Total Personality

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and traditions of the past bothers us. We are taking our last stand, and making our last defense toward the new order of things. Is our dread of criticism and ridicule, and our crude, futile attempt to dominate youth after all only a fear reaction? Probably not; and yet it is undoubtedly true that much of the emotional turmoil we adults manifest with regard to the behavior of adolescents might be accounted for on this basis.

Adolescence need not be the boiling, seething sea of emotionalism that many writers make it. It is true that feelings about life are intensified at this time, and that things seem to matter a great deal; yet these emotions have not developed suddenly and unexpectedly overnight; their development, in most cases, has been slow and orderly, and if the adolescent has not been too much repressed by his environment, this period of development will serve to integrate the various forces within him in such a way that the sum total of his responses will be adequate—that is, that he will have toward each of life's situations an appropriate emotion, the one that best serves the needs of a particular situation, whether it be joy or sorrow, fear or anger.

It is in the effort to solve some of the more abstract of life's problems, such as answering questions of origin and destiny, establishing a working philosophy of life including relation to parents and attitude to sex, and in seeking for personal satisfactions from work and play, that youth becomes confused. The whole situation is more difficult for the present generation than it has ever been before. There are fewer standards by which they may guide and direct their activities, and it is not surprising that they become filled with doubts and indecisions when

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

there are "so many Gods, so many Creeds, so many paths that wind and wind." All these problems have to be met, and the adolescent meets them in one fashion or another, most of them with a fair degree of success. There is sufficient pain and failure interspersed to test them out well, yet this may not be without value to the majority.

However, there are those who, because of their inadequate preparation for this testing-out period in life, or because the situations to which they are subjected are particularly stressful, find that life is intolerable. They cannot meet life on the open field of battle, but must needs introduce various subterfuges. These individuals are no longer seeking a victory in this unequal conquest. They ask no more than a chance to survive. They are willing to surrender or retreat.

The adolescent may choose less drastic methods of meeting the emotional problems in life than the fight to the finish out in the open. He may surrender himself to a world of phantasy, and in his make-believe world get some of the satisfactions denied him by reality. He may try, with an air of pseudo-sophistication to drown his problems in alcohol. He may retreat to what he considers a safe distance, and seek protection in a neurosis, and if this haven does not give him the sense of security he desires, he may go still further retreating into a psychosis where he is safe from the outside world for the time being at least.

Others find a temporary peace in denying the existence of any problem or danger, but their satisfactions are short-lived because reality will not be denied its due. The rough edges of life are softened a little for all of us



## The Total Personality

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by the process of self-deception, but it can only be carried so far before we must pay up.

The success which all those who are dealing with the adolescent will have, in helping them to meet life frankly, will depend to a very large extent upon how well prepared they themselves are to fight the same battle. The neurotic, daydreaming mother, the dogmatic, stern, disciplinarian type of father, will, for example, have but little to offer. The adolescent lacks confidence in such parents. He may be fond of them, too fond perhaps, but he does not admire them. If he appears to respect them, it is because they demand it; if he seems to obey them, it is for the same reason. They are lacking in the essentials of leadership.

It is fortunate that the pain of one's indiscretions is dulled by advancing years, but it is unfortunate indeed when memory and imagination become so dulled that we can no longer appreciate the adolescent's point of view towards the life before him, and the part his elders try to take in it.

But assuming that adults have a sympathetic appreciation of the adolescent's emotional status, and as Dr. Taft says,

. . . Granting that most of the adjustments should have been made earlier and taking adolescence as we actually find it, what is possible?

We can surround youth with encouragement. There need be no sneering superiority, no ridicule, no tyrannical authority, no dogmatic overruling, nothing to undermine the confidence and assertion that are necessary to approach work and love on an adult basis.

We can have young people as free as possible to develop their own interests, free to discover for themselves, to experiment,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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even to make mistakes. We can give them freedom to experiment in the ordering and control of their own group life as well as their individual interests.

We can recognize and supply the need of youth for interpretations of life, ethics, religions, philosophy, scientific and social theory—something general enough to be mastered verbally, and used to reduce the chaos of a new world to a known and familiar thing; something to make life a safer, more manageable affair. Adolescence craves a unifying theory to use as a stepping stone from the safe limits of childhood to a boundless universe, otherwise too strange to be faced.

Parents and schools can see to it that youth is supplied with definite skills and technics, that potential interests go over into action. They can show young people how to gain an objective happiness in creative work. They can so equip adolescence that it will not be left defenseless in the face of an adult world, with only dreams to offer.

The family can reduce the pullback of childhood, by encouraging economic independence, breaking away from home, going away to college, widening the social interests to extend beyond the family circle. The parents can keep their love for the child objective and unselfish and welcome his growing independence and heterosexual interests.

Last and most important, if we are wise enough and grown-up enough ourselves, we can give the adolescent an interpretation of sex and human behavior, that will enable him to face frankly his own cravings and inferiorities, real or imagined, and to adjust to them in a positive, constructive spirit.<sup>6</sup>

If we, as adults, take seriously the problems of the adolescent, and think in terms of how they affect him, and not attempt to minimize them or meet them by unjust criticism and ridicule; if we use our authority less frequently and with greater wisdom, and if we are not domi-

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<sup>6</sup> Jessie Taft, "Mental Hygiene Problems of Normal Adolescence," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1921, pp. 741-51.

## The Total Personality

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nated by our own unsolved emotional conflicts, but rather by sound judgment and reason, we can render invaluable assistance.

Parents and teachers must keep in mind that although human nature has not changed much in the last generation, the problems which young people have to meet are in many respects quite different. Those who would serve best the youth during this period, when understanding means so much, will do well to consider carefully the extent to which these new problems of the environment complicate life.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATIONAL MALADJUSTMENTS

OF all the adolescent behavior problems which cause parents and teachers concern and for which they seek outside assistance none is more common than that having to do with the child's ability to keep pace with others of his age in his school work. Parents who are quite indifferent to their children's manners and morals, who are totally ignorant of the children's emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions, and who look upon shyness, jealousy, cruelty and various other undesirable personality traits as mere phases of development to be passed through and outgrown, rise up in indignation when their children do not receive their promotions in school at the proper time. Failure in school is to most parents synonymous with mental deficiency which they feel casts an unfavorable reflection upon them, while teachers are usually afraid that failure will be blamed on poor teaching. The child's reaction, on the other hand, varies according to the attitude of those with whom he comes in contact and later on depends upon his insight and his own understanding why he has failed.

In reviewing a series of records covering 322 adolescents<sup>1</sup> referred to the psychiatrist by schools, colleges, physicians and parents for help with some problem, diffi-

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<sup>1</sup> The records referred to were selected, on the basis of age, from the author's personal files.

## Educational Maladjustments

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culty with school work was found to be a major reason for consultation in 117 cases, no other single problem being reported in so large a number of cases.

Only 24 of these 117 children had definite handicaps to which their school difficulties might have been attributed. In 2 cases the children were epileptic, and in 5 the children were handicapped by a condition or history of physiological defect, acute illness, or residuals from chronic disorders; in 17 cases there was an absolute deviation from normal intellectual capacity sufficient to account to a great extent for the difficulty.

### INADEQUATE INTELLECTUAL EQUIPMENT

The subject of deviations from so-called normal intelligence has already been discussed and illustrative cases have been cited in the chapter on intellectual abilities and disabilities. Its importance as a factor in educational maladjustments bears further emphasis.

The laws of the State of Massachusetts have required, since 1919, that all children three or more years retarded in mental development be reported annually; that provision be made, through the Division of Mental Deficiency, Department of Mental Diseases, for their examination; and that every town having ten or more such children must establish a special class for their instruction.<sup>2</sup>

According to a survey made by the State Department of Education, there were, in 1930, 551 special classes for children three or more years retarded in mental develop-

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<sup>2</sup> See General Laws, Chap. 71, Sec. 46, as amended by Statutes, 1922, Chap. 231.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

ment, and 8,332 children attending these classes.<sup>3</sup> In addition there were 125 classes, with an enrollment of 2,827 pupils, for children who were backward, but less than three years retarded, and who, by means of this special work, were enabled to avoid demotion as well as "non-promotion."<sup>4</sup>

These figures do not include children attending parochial schools nor those attending private schools; it may be assumed, however, that the general proportion of retarded children would not be altered much by including these two groups. Whether the extent of retardation in Massachusetts would be greater than that in other states using the same standards of measurement is a question that cannot be answered here. The important point for consideration is that an appreciable number of boys and girls who are apparently normal in other respects, are sufficiently retarded in their mental development to require special instruction in school. They are not feeble-minded, and as a group they may so closely approximate the normal group in their behavior that it becomes as difficult for the teacher as for the parent to determine where they belong. That their inadequate equipment does require special consideration becomes all too clear, however, as they reach the higher grades. This is well brought out in the following quotation from Dr. Doll:

The progress growing out of these experiences in special education has revealed that the backward child educationally resembles the feeble-minded child at only a slightly higher

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<sup>3</sup> The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Education, "Survey of Special Education for Atypical Children," January 1, 1930, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

## Educational Maladjustments

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level. His inherent difficulty with the academic curriculum is reflected in the fact that fewer than fifty per cent of the children who enter the public school graduate from the eighth grade. Only about thirty per cent go on to high school, and about ten per cent to college. Yet, the academic curriculum, being essentially a stepladder type of training, assumes that every child who enters first grade shall be prepared for college entrance. The large percentage of school children who fail without even reaching the sixth grade has been grossly ignored in the persistent attempt to force an academic education upon all those who enter the public school.<sup>5</sup>

The educational, industrial and social salvation of this poorly equipped group lies in a modification of our present educational system so that these cases will be recognized and adequate methods of training instituted so that they may be given the opportunity of making the most of their inherent intellectual endowment.

The educational problems of adolescence are to a large extent confined to the thirty per cent who reach high school and the ten per cent who reach college. This obviously leads further and further away from a consideration of the inferior groups. Yet, as already indicated, even these groups contain individuals whose intellectual endowment is relatively inferior to that of the large average group, and the degree of inferiority may be relatively as serious as the retardation of grammar school pupils. According to intelligence tests such individuals may have a perfectly normal, average mental development with an intelligence quotient ranging somewhere between 95 and 105, but inasmuch as they are endeavor-

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<sup>5</sup> Edgar A. Doll, Ph.D., "The Mental Health Value of Education," p. 2, reprinted from *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Philadelphia, May, 1930.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

ing to compete in a specialized field where the average is no longer 100 but perhaps 115, or higher, depending on the standards of the school, they may fail in the field of higher education, possibly achieving brilliant success later in life in some more practical field.

Poor work in school or college is by no means always an indication of intellectual inferiority, and inquiry into the possible causes of failure must not cease with measurement of intelligence. Dr. Wile, in a discussion of the child and the school, points out emphatically, "All of the child goes to school—not merely his intellect. His mind is in the custody of his body and his body affects his mind. His emotions determine his application and exertions, and his interests influence his emotions. His social reactions guide his intelligence and his intelligence determines his social experiences. The educational system affects the totality of his being, and his entire personality affects his school standing and his relations in the school. If there is a marked lack of harmony, he is a school failure, whether he be deemed good or bad. Who shall say with certainty where the blame must rest without a careful analysis of his innate and acquired capacity, his emotional life, his physical organization, and his social milieu?"<sup>6</sup>

### INADEQUATE PREPARATION

The group of 81 cases previously referred to as "doing poor work" included adolescents who were repeating grades, failing in their work, having difficulty with their courses, or, in general, not doing as well as might have

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<sup>6</sup> Ira S. Wile, "'Good' Education and 'Bad' Children," *Mental Hygiene*, January, 1925, pp. 105-12.



## Educational Maladjustments

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been expected from their chronological age or their apparent intellectual capacity.

The extent to which these children were handicapped by poor preparation for whatever school work they were doing, *i.e.*, either by poor pedagogy, continued poor application, or serious interruptions, cannot be stated; "poor preparation" was indicated in a number of cases but undoubtedly was a contributing factor in an even greater number.

*Mercedes* was handicapped in various ways by poor preparation for college. Her father, being an army officer, was moved about from station to station. She had attended four different preparatory schools, and this discontinuity was in itself disrupting. Moreover, each of these schools was small and its methods of supervision very strict so that Mercedes found it difficult to recite in large classes, and to assume the necessary responsibility for doing her daily work. She found the lack of supervision a relief and enjoyed wasting what she chose to consider her leisure hours.

It was suggested that she be given some assistance in "budgeting her time," in measuring out her work for daily study, and in learning habits of concentration. She improved with this assistance, but she continued to be extremely shy and timid about reciting in class. In her second year she had difficulty with mathematics and it appeared that although she had learned the principles in parrot fashion, she was unable to make any application to practical problems. Study to Mercedes had always meant writing out assigned exercises and memorizing assigned lessons, at a specified time and under strict supervision, and helping her to budget her time resulted only

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

in substituting self-assigned periods of study for misuse of her leisure; the essential study habits continued. It was later learned that she was dropped at the end of her sophomore year because of failure to reach the "required average."

*Milton*, who was only fourteen years of age, met his problem of "poor preparation" when he entered preparatory school. His parents were affluent and traveled a great deal—in fact so much that he had had little opportunity to acquire the fundamentals of an orthodox education. Being solicitous about his health, and, selfishly demanding of his companionship, these parents had carted the boy from one place to another, placing him for brief periods in whatever educational institution happened to be available. Not only was the continuity of his school work disrupted, but the opportunity of cultivating deep-rooted friendships was lost.

When at the age of fourteen, this boy found himself in a school in which the educational standards were high and definite social demands were made on the students, he was for a time at a complete loss to know how to meet this situation, and, although he made a courageous effort, he required both counsel and support before he managed to settle down and make a place for himself.

### LACK OF INTEREST OR MOTIVATION

There are individual situations in which, however, regardless of the caliber of mental equipment or the quality of preparation, a student may do poor work and seem incapable of proper concentration, and chief of these is lack of vital interest in the work to be done. This lack

## Educational Maladjustments

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of interest and attitude of indifference, as Averill well remarks, is rarely encountered in a pupil in his "games" or his "self-imposed tasks outside the shadows of the school." It not infrequently happens, moreover, that these outside activities are so intensely absorbing that the student has not only no interest but also no energy for school work.

The absorbing "extra-curricular" interest may be in athletics or dramatics, or in a member of the opposite sex; in reading "non-required" literature, in music, painting, or dancing; in studying the fashions, making a radio, or constructing miniature airplanes. Some adolescents are perfectly capable of so ordering their various affairs that, with apparently no effort, they can be football captains, distinguished amateur artists, or social leaders and still maintain a "gentleman's average." Others seem incapable of making even a gesture in that direction.

The following brief case stories are illustrations of the way in which three different adolescent boys handled their non-academic interests.

*Winthrop's* chief interest was in athletics. His first boarding school experience was in a large institution in which considerable emphasis was placed on athletics, and the students were expected to regard the preparation of class assignments as their own responsibility.

Winthrop made an excellent showing in athletics but frankly neglected his studies, in which he was not interested. At the end of the school year he failed in every subject and, in spite of his outstanding record in athletics, was not encouraged to return. He then spent some time with a tutor, with rather unsatisfactory results and, when last heard from he had been sent to Switzerland where

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

he was allowed to make the most of winter sports, and spend a certain amount of time in a private school. At this time he was seventeen years old.

One must hold the school responsible in part for this boy's failure. His immaturity should have been recognized and safeguards should have been set up around this unreasonable régime. His parents, had they kept in closer contact with the boy and informed themselves of his scholastic record, could have intervened and prevented such a useless dissipation of his time. The real problem, however, has its origin in his early training when he should have been taught to place proper values on the varied interests of life. He then could have saved himself in spite of the indifference manifested both by his parents and by the school.

*Burton*, a boy of the same age as Winthrop and also attending a boys' preparatory school, was also falling down in his school work. Although his parents had been divorced and his mother had remarried, he, like Winthrop, got on well with his family and with people in general. He was planning to enter the Navy and although his academic work was poor, he felt confident that he could "get by the exams." His mother, however, was anxious over his low standards and mediocre work.

It appeared that Burton had at least two interests sufficiently engrossing to make the thought of spending time on school work rather displeasing to him: The one was baseball, the other was his "girl." Although he denied spending any time daydreaming about the girl, he complained that he "just couldn't concentrate" on his studies and it was evident that these other interests were absorbing too much of his time and energy.

## Educational Maladjustments

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Here again we find a boy whose habits and personality traits were of such striking immaturity that they were not able to withstand the test which comes inevitably to the adolescent who must face life ready to assume many of its responsibilities and obligations unsupervised.

In contrast to these two boys, it might be of interest to describe the activities of a lad who manages his affairs very well and is regarded as the leader and the most popular boy in his class.

*Donald* is eighteen years old and a senior in high school. His father is a successful attorney with a number of small but flourishing business interests. His mother has but a limited educational background but takes an active part in the local woman's club and parent-teacher association and reads a great deal along the line of her chief interest, home and family. Donald has an older brother studying at Yale and two younger brothers who are still in grammar school.

From Sunday morning to Saturday night Donald's activities range through a series of varied interests. On Sunday morning he first teaches a class of young boys in Sunday School and then calls for his family and drives them to church. Sunday afternoon he goes hiking with a group of boys, or motoring with his family, or he plays tennis or reads. On week days he attends school from eight to two-thirty, doing almost all of his "home work" during his study periods. After two-thirty he plays football, basketball, tennis, or baseball, or he goes swimming—according to the season. Until the beginning of his senior year in high school, he managed a paper route of over 400 subscribers, which he and his brother built up. Evenings he spends at home or with friends reading, talk-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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ing, listening to the radio, playing games, and occasionally in some school activity. On Saturdays he has always helped clean up the car, the yard and basement, and straightened his room; recently he has, however, been spending most of his Saturdays driving a car for his father.

It would seem as if none of Donald's interests is pursued at the sacrifice of any other. He was captain of the football team this year but at the same time maintained one "C" and three "B" grades in his classes; he has a girl, whom he takes to various school functions, to parties, and occasional movies, but, during the two years that he has been "going with her," he has allowed her to interfere but little with his powers of concentration, if his present grades and the fact that he "made honors" last year can be regarded as indicative of his ability to study. In addition to all these interests he takes an active part in a local DeMolay group in which he is proud of being senior steward, and he took part in the senior class play. Recent summers he has spent acting as assistant counselor in a boys' camp, taking short motor trips with his family, and, most recently of all, working in the dairy of a large summer hotel where most of the employees are college students.

Donald is probably what fathers proudly designate "an all-round chap." He makes a good appearance, dresses neatly and in excellent taste, is courteous, and easy to converse with, and is equally at home on the dance floor, football field, in the classroom, swimming pool, living-room, Sunday School, or "dairy," and while he does not excel in every activity, he distinguishes himself in one or two and holds his own respectably in the rest.

## Educational Maladjustments

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The problem of catering to the intellectual needs of the superior child was discussed in the chapter on intellectual abilities and disabilities, but, inasmuch as the superior intellectual equipment without adequate challenge is a cause for academic failure, another case may be cited at this time.

*Susannah* was a youngster ten years of age whose academic work was being interrupted by repeated absences from school, invariably attributed to acute physical upsets. Headaches, stomachaches, nausea, abdominal pains, and numerous similar complaints were preventing *Susannah* from attending school. She was in the fourth grade and the principal of the school felt that unless she showed marked and immediate improvement, she would have to be demoted.

This girl's intellectual equipment had never been questioned either at home or at school. On the basis of psychological tests her intelligence quotient was 146, indicating that she had a superior intellectual equipment. It was accordingly suggested to her parents and teachers that, instead of demoting her, the possibility of promotion, as soon as she had demonstrated her ability to do the work, be held out to her and that such outside assistance as was necessary to help her prepare herself for the fifth grade be furnished.

Within a few months *Susannah* was promoted to the fifth grade and was doing "good average work."

### EMOTIONAL HANDICAPS

Educational failures due to emotional, as contrasted with intellectual, factors, constitute a numerically larger

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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group, are more diversified in relation to the symptoms which they present, and, in the nature of things, are more amenable to treatment. Like the problems of intellectual inadequacy they may arise in every type of social, cultural and economic background. Emotional conflicts cannot be ignored as contributing causes of failure even in cases of relative intellectual inferiority, although as definite causes of failure they are more impressive when they occur in the individual with superior intellectual endowment.

Young people who have never had the opportunity of developing their own independence and learning how to meet the ordinary, everyday obligations of life without direction and supervision, and all those who have never even learned that they have any obligations are necessarily handicapped by their immaturity and the unsoundness of their previous training.

Most parents would make great sacrifices to protect their children from the unhappy experiences and the mental anguish which awaits them as they progress in the journey through life. Many are foolish enough to believe it can be done. They put their child into a glass case at an early age, not even permitting him to know about the struggle being waged outside. They do not allow him to meet life as it actually exists, and thus deny him the protection which knowledge—the best possible armor—and experience—the most trustworthy weapon—gives human beings for meeting life's two most devastating foes, fear and failure.

The following case is an example of a girl whose close family ties and inadequate preparation for interests and activities other than those centered around home life was



## Educational Maladjustments

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reflected in her school work, which was of a lower grade than her intellectual equipment necessitated.

*Celia* and her mother were referred to the psychiatrist by the school principal who thought that *Celia* was not doing well enough in school and appeared to be emotionally unstable. She was fourteen years of age and an only child. Although she was fond of her father, she had always shown a more intense devotion to her mother. She was extremely dependent upon the latter and made all sorts of demands upon her, even insisting on being allowed to sleep in the same bed with her. Her requests were invariably granted.

*Celia* had had more or less difficulty in her school work from the beginning, in spite of the fact that she had an average intellectual endowment. She had built her life so closely around that of her mother that she took little pleasure in reading, athletics, moving pictures, and other interests which are usual and normal for a fourteen-year-old girl. She was said to get along better with older persons than with those of her own age, with whom she was inclined to act a bit bored. She made a point of dramatizing her devotion to her mother and, while at school, she picked out older girls to whom she devoted her attention to the exclusion of those of her own age.

The school principal also reported that *Celia* was lacking in responsibility, rude to those in authority, and given to outbursts of temper.

The whole picture of this adolescent girl is so obviously one of immaturity and unpreparedness for life even at the beginning of adolescence, and the history of her inadequate preparation is so much in keeping with the results, that further elaboration seems unnecessary.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

The following case presents a different type of relationship between child and family, but one which also handicapped the child by offering her no opportunity to grow up.

*Priscilla* was a college freshman who came to the psychiatrist much disturbed over the fact that she seemed to be failing in her college work.

Inquiry into her family relationships promptly revealed the fact that *Priscilla's* life had always been completely surrounded by the most severe rules and regulations. In their united efforts to enforce discipline, her parents had allowed her little or no opportunity to express her own ideas or develop any initiative.

*Priscilla* had never been allowed any selection in what she did or where she went, and only within very narrow limits could she determine with whom she would associate, where she would go, and what she would do. All these decisions were made on the basis of what her parents felt was best for her, without any consideration of her particular inclinations.

This domineering attitude which had been imposed upon her from outside, created many difficulties when she got out on her own. She was so filled with doubts and indecisions about trivial things and spent so much of her time muddling about in an effort to acquire sufficient initiative to do anything at all, that in spite of her high psychological rating, which grouped her with the upper 12 per cent of her class, she was actually failing to get passing marks in certain subjects.

The case of *Curtis*, a thirteen-year-old lad who, despite a mental capacity above average, was having difficulty with his school work, and also in "mixing" with boys of

## Educational Maladjustments

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his own age, illustrates a number of family situations adversely affecting a child's progress.

As the youngest of the family, Curtis had been always babied and excused from assuming responsibility for many of the routines expected of a boy of his age. This led to his developing an exaggerated idea of his own importance, so that he got in the habit of "high-hatting" other children, which accounted for his inability to get on with them.

Curtis' brother, aged sixteen, was doing very well in school and assuming responsibility in keeping with his age. Curtis therefore came up for a considerable amount of unfavorable comparison. His sister called him "the dumb-bell of the family" and even his parents discussed his apparent shortcomings with an air of puzzled disappointment, frequently before the boy.

The parents, seeking to explain his poor work on the grounds of poor teaching, had Curtis transferred to another school to finish up his eighth grade work and take his diploma. The boy had wanted very much to graduate with his class and the transfer left him with a feeling of having failed to accomplish the task he had set out for. Consequently he was bitterly disappointed and resentful toward his parents for making him change schools. He took little interest in his work in the new school—a junior high school—as his family had already made plans to withdraw him from this school at the end of the year (and thus again before allowing him to graduate) in order to send him to the private preparatory school which his brother was attending. His mother was eager to have both the boys in the same school for one year, the older as a senior and the younger as a freshman, obviously a

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

bad arrangement for Curtis who had spent the last five years trying to compete unsuccessfully with his brother.

It was interesting to see that a psychological examination alone was surprisingly effective in getting an improvement in Curtis' school work. Although it was given purely for purposes of determining his abilities and disabilities it did a great deal to establish confidence in himself and reassure the parents. It was the first of a series of steps to get the boy started toward efficient school work and a happier relation with people both at home and outside. The improvement came as the result of establishing confidence in himself.

Emotional handicaps may have their origin in isolated episodes or attitudes as well as in the more general family relationships just described.

*Faith's* mother consulted the psychiatrist when the child was twelve years of age on account of her poor school work and some anxiety on the part of the parents that she was mentally backward. Her failure had a sudden onset while she was in the sixth grade and became so marked in the seventh that teachers as well as parents showed a real concern in it.

It appeared that her difficulty in school had begun almost immediately after the birth of a younger brother. At this time she had become irritable, difficult to manage, and had temporarily reverted back to bed-wetting.

There was nothing about Faith's physical development that was unusual except for a rather early puberty. She had always been regarded as unusually intense and high-strung, however, and for a time had been handicapped by stuttering.

## Educational Maladjustments

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Faith was herself considerably upset over her school failure. She said that she thought she was "a kind of idiot" and knew she would fail in school regardless of effort. She was convinced that her parents regarded her as stupid, for she had heard her mother remark that she could count on the other children "but not on Faith."

Faith was also convinced that her parents liked the other children better. It was therefore not surprising to learn from her mother that Faith quarreled a great deal with the other children, was extremely sensitive, and never showed any affection except on occasions when she was alone with her mother.

There was other evidence in the conversations with this girl that she felt herself to be sharing the feeling of others about her, and that she was extremely sensitive over her conviction that she was not loved. She discussed quite freely how she had consciously planned to make herself disagreeable by creating "an awful fuss" whenever an opportunity arose. She said that she hated a "dolly, sweet girl" and would "simply raise Cain" whenever she found herself becoming docile. "If it weren't for my friends at school," she remarked one day, "I would leave home."

Interestingly enough, in a series of psychological tests she graded four years above her chronological age. Both the quality and the quantity of her intelligence was definitely superior. When confronted with the fact that she had a particularly good intellectual equipment which could be used in getting satisfactions and really achieving something worth while in life, her whole attitude changed and she began to seek a means of putting herself across in a more mature way.

It was suggested to the family that some provisions be

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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made to help her overcome her special problem with reference to mathematics; that she be permitted to spend the summer at a girls' camp; and that her educational program be adjusted to meet her special intellectual needs. Her parents also became more optimistic, and the foundation was laid for a happier relationship between the child and her family, enabling the girl to overcome her feeling of inadequacy and start out upon an educational program which would permit her to use her intellectual equipment to best advantage.

*Arthur* was a well-endowed boy both mentally and physically, with athletic build, strong features, and a pleasant personality. His mother had died when he was three years of age, and after his father's remarriage Arthur had gone to live with an aunt who was kindly and affectionate, but probably a bit too much concerned about his health, manners, and personal appearance.

Arthur pursued his scholastic work in an uneventful manner, keeping well up with his classes without any particular evidence of brilliance. He did not find it difficult to put himself across in athletic activities as he played an excellent game of baseball, and had received special distinction at several summer camps for his swimming; in addition, he had a general interest in numerous other out-of-door sports. In high school he showed special interest in his courses in literature, spent a good deal of time writing poetry, and made a hobby of studying the classical authors.

In spite of what appeared to be a good all-around development, this lad did not make friends easily. He was said to be a bit too "mushy" with boys, and, at one time, it was intimated that he was showing rather pre-

## Educational Maladjustments

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cocious homosexual tendencies. He occasionally went to a dance or to moving pictures with girls, but on the whole made no effort whatever to participate in social activities where they were involved. He was more inclined to find his emotional outlets in his poetry and literature.

Arthur's father shared the boy's interest in athletics, but not his interest in literature. He was a materialistic man who had been trained in engineering and who ridiculed to the point of humiliating Arthur about his literary efforts. He had his son's future well mapped out and most of his plans involved activities which the father felt would have been a distinct asset to him had he had the opportunity of engaging in them when he was a boy. He pushed the boy into all types of athletics in an effort to gratify his own unfulfilled desires along this line. He was eager for Arthur to attend the university whose degree would most enhance the boy's reputation in the social and business world. All these interests, which might have fitted in well to the father's own life, considering his personality make-up, contributed but little to the satisfaction of the boy. When presently his father had him transferred to a school where participation in athletic activities was given greater emphasis, Arthur found various ways of avoiding these pursuits and became increasingly absorbed in his literary efforts. This immediately created friction and later real conflict between father and son and it was not long before the father was complaining that the boy was getting arrogant, argumentative, and at times defiant.

Arthur, on the other hand, began to complain that his father no longer understood him, that he was cold and calculating in every move he made and that he thought

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

only of his own ambitions without considering what was best for his son. In other words, by the time the boy was sixteen years of age, he had himself made a diagnosis as to the reason for the incompatibility which seemed to increase each time the boy returned from school. His father's disparaging and scornful attitude toward the boy's literary efforts gradually dulled his own enthusiasm for them, without, however, increasing his interest or ability in athletic activities, and between the ages of sixteen and seventeen, the boy, as the father stated, simply slumped. His work was less and less efficient; he became self-centered, introspective, and increasingly selfish; and, what concerned the father most, Arthur began to be resentful and rebellious toward any suggestions his father might offer.

In such a state of mind the lad soon became the victim of his own egocentricity and began to seek the companionship of the younger and more inadequate group from whom he could get some recognition with a minimum of effort. Several of his associations were brought down to a level which caused him to be looked upon by the rest of the group as an undesirable citizen in the school. It was only after many weeks of intensive therapy with the boy and after educating the father as to the boy's real needs and the necessity of building the boy's life around his own personality, rather than around his father's, that anything of a constructive nature was accomplished.

The next two cases indicate the extent to which parental ambition for high marks may create emotional situations which interfere with the best work of the student.



## Educational Maladjustments

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*Harold* had no difficulty in making a place for himself in college after the first few months. He had an exceptionally good intellectual equipment, graduated from high school at the head of his class, stood high in psychological tests and percentile rank and was on the dean's list. Beginning his senior year he became "nervous," restless, and found it difficult to concentrate and his marks began to show his inability to apply himself to college work. A careful investigation revealed no cause for this emotional turmoil other than extreme anxiety over making Phi Beta Kappa. It appeared that his parents, who were both highly intellectual, had so impressed him with the importance of making this honorary scholastic society that his fear of "disgracing them" was ever-present and becoming more insistent on his mind.

*Hugo*, another student of good intellectual endowment, whose father was dead and whose mother was making a heroic struggle to keep him in college, worried himself to the point where he was on the verge of failure over his inability to live up to the ambitions of his hard-working but misunderstanding mother, who continually impressed him with the fact that she was making all kinds of sacrifices for him and nothing but the highest grade in his college work could possibly repay her for his efforts.

Occasionally parental ambition will take the form of pushing the children ahead, rather than urging high standards of scholarship.

*Bessie* and *Jack*, aged fourteen and sixteen, were brother and sister who, in spite of being well-endowed intellectually, had had a series of difficulties with their school work from the very beginning. Their trouble

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

seemed to be due entirely to the fact that their father insisted on pushing them beyond their intellectual level so that, although one child was one year, and the other two years ahead, neither experienced any of the satisfaction of doing good work and year after year both were obliged to spend their vacations being tutored.

This ambitious, slave-driving parent deprived his children not only of the satisfactions that come from achievement in school, but also of the opportunity of making contacts which would contribute to their social development. The boy was neither actively nor passively interested in athletics, games, dancing, or other social activities; he was quite without friends, and had, moreover, taken the attitude that he had no interest in people. The girl, while evidently less asocial than her brother, made acquaintances which were constantly changing, and never built up any deep friendships.

Both children were developing a strong resentment toward parental domination and, being afraid to take it out on their father, they developed an abusive attitude toward their mother. Neither one met any issue with their parents frankly if they could avoid it. They became evasive, and whenever they felt that a lie would serve the purpose of preventing a scene at home, they did not hesitate to use it.

This case illustrates the folly of undue ambition on the part of the parents, for not only have the scholastic careers of these children been injured, but their personalities have been marred in the process.

To be sure, ambition for high standing or rapid progress may have its source not in the parent but in the

## Educational Maladjustments

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student himself, and still give rise to emotional conflict as may be seen in the case of Myrtle.

*Myrtle* came to the college physician early in her freshman year with the complaint that the moment she entered the chemistry laboratory, she became so upset by the fumes that "it would be utterly impossible" for her to continue with the subject. The physician did not consider the problem a medical one, and referred the girl to the psychiatrist.

In her first conference with the psychiatrist, this student reported that she was doing fairly good work in all courses except chemistry. In spite of spending four hours on each chemistry assignment—an amount of time quite out of proportion with that spent on her other subjects—she was practically failing the course. She had become so anxious and depressed that she thought of leaving college.

This young woman had made a very good record in high school. The psychiatrist learned that all through her high school course she had been competing with a boy for scholastic honors, and had become much more concerned over getting "high marks" than over any possible interest or satisfaction in her studies. During her Junior year, she had registered for a class in physics but on getting into the class she found that she was in keen competition with two other brilliant students. She immediately became afraid that she would be unable to get a good grade in this course and promptly dropped it as she didn't wish her entire standing to be dragged down by a low grade in one course. For the short time during which she did attend the class her reaction was similar to her present reaction to college chemistry. It was

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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suggested to her that her attitude toward chemistry was merely a projection of this earlier attitude toward the physics course—worry, anxiety, and anticipatory fear of failure.

Inasmuch as this student was preparing to teach languages, it seemed wise to permit her to drop the chemistry as, quite aside from the emotional upsets, the amount of time spent on this course did not seem justified by the results.

Interestingly enough, this student returned to the psychiatrist the following month eager to report that after being told she could drop chemistry she had somehow begun to feel that it really wasn't as difficult as she had thought. She had decided to go on with it and on the last examination had done as well as the students who were supposedly well-grounded in the subject.

Frequently the emotional reaction which is manifested toward a situation which one is trying to meet at the moment is an emotion carried over from some past experience, just as one may be inclined to take a violent and unjustifiable dislike to a new acquaintance, who unconsciously reminds one of a person whom one may have reason for disliking.

As might be expected, students themselves rarely attribute their failure to the relative inferiority of their intellectual endowments. Particularly in college, failure holds for most students a fear of failure in meeting the rest of life's problems. In their own attitudes are reflected the ambitions of their parents, whom they fear to disappoint and disgrace. And so, often unconsciously, they seek for some reason which will explain their in-

## Educational Maladjustments

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ability to carry on and at the same time relieve them of the stigma and shame which failure due to inferior intellectual endowment would hold for them and for their parents.

*Marianna* was a college freshman who was having considerable difficulty with her academic work. She explained that her low grades were really due to a speech defect which made it impossible for her to talk in class, but from a careful inquiry into her history and numerous conversations with her, it seemed obvious that she was greatly exaggerating this speech impediment. *Marianna* had always attended private schools where she had received special concessions because of her "handicap." She had recited when she had felt like it, and the rest of the time she had been excused. Situations which were unpleasant, or not to her own liking, she had invariably avoided with the apology that they made her "nervous" and affected her speech. In other words, she had been using a rather trivial handicap as a means of avoiding the difficulties of life. It therefore seemed necessary to look for a more fundamental reason for her failure in her college work.

According to the class tests, *Marianna's* percentile rank was .06, indicating that she belonged to the lower 6 per cent of her class. She told the psychiatrist quite frankly that she had always found school work hard and that her college course had been extremely difficult. She confessed that she had taken botany, not because she had any interest in the subject, but because she had wanted to avoid mathematics which she had found way beyond her intellectual ability. She was rather resentful at having to take, merely for the sake of getting credits, so

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

many subjects that did not interest her. Failure in her academic accomplishments was leading to other difficulties which she resented even more strongly. She found herself on the registrar's list which prevented her from entering into certain extra-curricular activities and from accepting invitations to social functions away from the college campus.

In a subsequent conference, Marianna confided that she was not in college from any desire on her part, but rather to please her family. Her father was of the opinion that college was the best thing for every modern American girl. Being a business executive and a "self-made man," he believed that every girl should be independent if the occasion demanded, and he looked upon a college education as a means of gaining that independence. It was interesting to note that neither he nor Marianna's mother had ever attended college.

This student had an intellectual equipment that might have been adequate for the task at hand if she had had any real intellectual interest or any ambition for a college education. Having no real urge or intellectual curiosity, and knowing that she could use her speech impediment to get her out of her difficulties in college as she had used it in the past to get her out of other difficulties, she could not have been expected to make a satisfactory adjustment to college life with only a mediocre intellectual equipment.

Parental ambitions become such an important factor when educational maladjustment is due to an intellectual inadequacy which the parents have refused to recognize, that this situation may well bear another illustrative case. Unlike Marianna, the boy in the following story never attempted to explain his school failure on any basis save

## Educational Maladjustments

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conflicts that of intellectual inferiority, but, being unable to convince his father of his inability to compete in the field of higher education, he went on from failure to failure, giving up the opportunity for success and satisfaction in the field which really was interesting to him, and which he seemed to have genuine aptitude.

So far as could be learned from his parents, *Walter* had got along satisfactorily in his school work until the age of twelve when his father became sufficiently affluent to take him out of the high school and place him in a large boarding school where he remained for a year and a half with indifferent success in his school activities. He was out of school for the next six months on account of illness, and the following year returned to a second boarding school where he carried on his work on a passable, but not very satisfactory level.

The father's next move was to place the boy in a tutoring school where under constant pressure and a system of several years of continuous grinding he was groomed for college, which he entered in the fall. He failed in all his courses and at mid-year was requested to leave. But, after more intensive tutoring and several weeks at summer school, he was readmitted the next fall. During this year he got by his mid-year examinations, but failed again in June. He was greatly dejected over these failures, for he had worked very hard, having an intense desire to do the job and please his father. He had no ambition of his own for a college education, however, and he derived no satisfaction from his work. After being dropped on account of his failure in June examination, he got a mechanical job in which he did exceptionally good work, demonstrating that he had real ability.

many students of this experience with much enthusiasm and which that it was the only thing he had ever done that on the whole he liked.

Walter had not been employed long, however, before his father resumed the task of trying to get him through college and finally Walter was admitted to a school of engineering in which the competition was even keener than it had been in college.

When failure became imminent in this new situation, his father consulted the psychiatrist. The whole situation was discussed in great detail and the father was told that Walter did not have the necessary intellectual equipment to enable him to go beyond the high school. The father was not, however, in the least embarrassed by this. He pointed out that Walter had passed most of his first-year college courses and could undoubtedly be pushed still further. So he proceeded with his usual tactics, exerting pressure on the boy and interceding for him with the school. But his efforts availed him nothing in the long run, for the boy continued to muddle along without understanding what the work was really all about, and, at the end of the first semester, was dropped.

In the meantime, although Walter was outwardly submitting to his father's demands, he was feeling resentful over the futility of his existence. He fully appreciated his intellectual limitations and realized that the principal motive behind his father's interest in him was to have a college graduate in the family. During the six months in the technical school he began to drink heavily and, while ostensibly acquiescing in his father's plans, he was becoming evasive, untrustworthy, and, under the influence of liquor, totally irresponsible.



## Educational Maladjustments

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There is no way of classifying the emotional conflicts of youth. They are as varied as life itself. They are created and perpetuated by the economic and social status of the individual, moral codes, racial differences, religious creeds, mental and physical handicaps, real and imaginary peculiarities and eccentricities, family relationships, sex adjustments, and family obligations and responsibilities.

These emotional conflicts result in conduct that is frequently incompatible with the standards and ideals of the individual himself, as well as the world in which he lives. Most of the problems here discussed were precipitated by the complexity of the environment and cannot be attributed to any one particular situation or condition with which they were confronted. Many of the problems would never have arisen had the demands of life itself been just a little less difficult.

There is no reason to believe that these individuals, who have failed to meet adequately the demands of the scholastic environment, are to be failures in making a place for themselves when confronted with the more concrete and practical situations of the world outside the classroom. It simply indicates that with their particular type of mental equipment and personality make-up, the so-called "process of getting adjusted" may take a little longer, and even if punctuated with unhappy periods while they are finding themselves there is every reason to expect ultimate success in some chosen field.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONDUCT PROBLEMS, I: UNDESIRABLE HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

THE large number of human beings handicapped by physical illness and defect, inferior intellectual endowment, and adverse environmental conditions represents but a small proportion of all those who fall short of the achievement of which they are capable or the happiness to which they are entitled. All the misery in the world is not due to imperfections in the organism or in the economic and social order of things.

Philosophies have been built up and torn down in an effort to find some means of assuring peace, contentment, and satisfaction to mankind. Epicurus worshiped at the temple of pleasure, seeking joy of a deep and lasting quality; the Stoics repressed all emotion, developing a tolerance for the unpleasant which would render them indifferent to pain; while Plato built his philosophy around the inherent value and satisfaction of virtue itself, with utter disregard for rewards, punishment, pleasure, or pain which he regarded as but incidents in the struggle. In a limited sense these philosophies were all directed toward improving the mental hygiene of the individual. They have been shattered to bits and remolded again and again by individuals who required something a little bit different to suit their own particular needs. No harm has come from such philosophical speculations; only a

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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limited number of people know of these intellectual gymnastics; even fewer know and understand what they are all about; and only an occasional person pays any attention to them.

Just at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Dr. Sigmund Freud of Vienna introduced into this philosophical search a very practical and dynamic flavor. With the aid of his colleagues, students, and an ever increasing lay following, he popularized the idea of the effect of the unconscious on our everyday activity, making a new contribution to our understanding of motives for human conduct, and supplying us with an instrument which permits us to affect the emotional life, and subsequently the conduct, of the individual to a greater extent than was possible heretofore.<sup>1</sup>

Although "psychoanalysis" as a term is well known to the layman, the "psychoanalytic hypotheses" will bear discussion even in this connection. Dr. Martin W. Peck, in his article, "The Meaning of Psychoanalysis,"<sup>2</sup> summarizes these as follows:

In comparison with older schools of psychology, psychoanalysis contains new material and makes radical departures from other viewpoints. This matter may be summarized as follows:

(a) Psychoanalysis deals chiefly with the "unconscious" mental life, maintaining that the more important mental activity goes on outside the subject's awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge the debt that psychiatry owes to Dr. Sigmund Freud and his followers for their most stimulating contributions to the whole subject of psychiatry and particularly that which has to do with a better understanding of childhood behavior.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 199, No. 17, Oct. 25, 1928, pp. 814-24.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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(b) It establishes repression as a central psychologic mechanism, meaning by repression a purposeful omission or elimination of mental material from consciousness. In normal states this mechanism disposes of what is unnecessary and inconvenient for consciousness. The difference between healthy and pathologic repression is chiefly one of degree. Healthy repression is a mechanism for efficient management of childish and asocial qualities which are common to all. Pathologic repression comes into play under special need, and is used to evade tendencies which are so potent and in such crude contrast to anything acceptable by consciousness that they cannot be disposed of by more constructive means. In both cases the material repressed remains in the unconscious. In the former it is integrated into the structure of the mental organization and is compatible with health. In the latter it remains unassimilated, is a source of inner mental disharmony, and is often the basis of neurosis and other maladjustment.

(c) Psychoanalysis recognizes unconscious mental conflict as a source of psychic difficulty. Conscious mental conflict is apparent to all. The conception that such conflict may go on completely outside the conscious grasp of the individual is distinctive to psychoanalysis.

(d) There is a new emphasis on infantile and child psychology, again stressing the unconscious features. Appropriate psychologic development at this early period is felt to establish patterns of reaction which insure satisfactory adult adjustments. On the other hand, failure in the solution of some basic developmental problems may result in their being carried over to adulthood, as a sort of unfinished business of the past, which complicates all later mental reactions.

Even those adults who see the necessity of adequately preparing the child to meet the ever increasing obligations of his school life, and appreciate the necessity of instilling in him such traits as truthfulness and honesty, not infrequently overlook such less

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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well-defined personality traits as evasiveness, jealousy, demands for attention, lack of consideration of the feelings of others, avoidance of responsibility, and other similar traits which develop in such an insidious manner but with such devastating results in later life. One cannot be too much impressed with the importance of thinking of social conduct in terms of symptoms and in making every effort at the earliest possible date to interpret the undesirable activity in terms of the purpose it serves the child at the moment. This means that conduct, whether it be good or bad, when reduced to its simplest terms is the reaction of a particular individual to a particular situation in life, and if the conduct is to be intelligently understood, either for the purpose of perpetuating it or eliminating it, one must know, as intimately as possible, the individual and must also be informed about his life situation as a whole.

In other words, conduct must be interpreted in terms of the individual's past experiences. The cross-section method serves no useful purpose.

The personality which the adolescent has developed for himself, his habits, mental attitudes, and all that constitutes his own particular individuality, must be looked upon as a coöperative effort between nature and nurture. The result may be regarded as satisfactory to society because of some one outstanding achievement—as, for example, becoming an opera star at eighteen—or as unsatisfactory because of some serious blunder which has landed the individual in jail for a long-time sentence. Many reasons would be given why Mary has succeeded and why John fell by the wayside, and each reason would always be emphasized as *the* reason. Yet one would have

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

to know a great deal about John and much about John's environment in order to understand why he got into his trouble and after one knew all about him, one might well find that the act which sent him to jail was but a detail in the whole story, and that Mary's apparent success may have been attained only through sacrifice, sorrow, and grief.

Human conduct still presents too complex a problem to permit the relationship between cause and effect to be written for all to read. Broken homes, selfish parents, and vicious environments are not responsible for all the children who are bad; neither are stable homes, kindly parents, and healthy environments responsible for all the good ones.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, a sufficiently close relationship between unstable parents and neurotic children and between broken homes and delinquency to justify society in making every effort to assure all children what should be their rightful heritage, and there is sufficient justification for the psychiatrist as well as for the parent, to seek the cause of conduct difficulties within the child's environment.

What are some of the undesirable conduct manifestations—the bad habits, unpleasant personality traits, and unhealthy attitudes—over which parents and teachers

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<sup>3</sup> The situation is the same with regard to physical illness and disease. One mother who had four children found that the oldest had measles. Although she isolated the rest of the family with scientific care and precision in accord with the doctor's orders, yet one after the other, each of these carefully protected youngsters became ill with the measles, keeping the household upset for months. Her neighbor also had four children and when one of them got the measles, she said, "I won't be having Mrs. J's experience. If they must all have the measles, let all be ill at once." So she exposed the whole group to the one who was ill and got ready to care for them all at once and together, but nothing happened to the other three.

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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feel concerned and for which they frequently seek the help of physician, psychologist, and psychiatrist? The following series of "complaints" made by parents have been selected at random from among the author's records:

1. Boy, 16 years: Is very self-conscious and seems to feel inferior to others.
2. Boy, 15½ years: Is "very self-willed"; wants to be "one of the big boys."
3. Girl, 17 years: Is extremely introspective and thinks only about herself.
4. Boy, 12 years: Wets the bed practically every night.
5. Girl, 13 years: Is cross and irritable and always finding fault with everything.
6. Girl, 18 years: Has nightmares; talks, walks, and screams in her sleep.
7. Boy, 15 years: Is quite friendless; doesn't seem to know how to get on with young people of his age.
8. Girl, 15: Tells fantastic stories about herself and her family which have no basis in fact.
9. Boy, 17: Is constantly complaining of various physical symptoms, although medical examination gives no indication of disease.
10. Girl, 18: Is "painfully shy," diffident, and sensitive; cries easily.
11. Girl, 17: Bites her nails habitually.
12. Boy, 15: Annoys every one by his rudely aggressive ways; is always into everything and seems insensitive to other people's reactions toward him.

These are a few of the everyday problems common among adolescents wherever they may be, and they all represent some maladjustment between the individual and his environment. They are problems to the parent who

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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finds them annoying, or humiliating, or alarming; but to the psychiatrist they are the symptoms of some deeper and less apparent problem—a conflict between the individual and the real world in which he is obliged to live. Like fevers, headaches, rashes, and nausea which may be alarming enough in themselves to the parent but significant only as symptoms of more fundamental disorder to the physician, these problems may be the danger signals of personality disorders which, like physical disorders, may require wise and intensive treatment if permanent damage is to be avoided.

In an effort to present the problems of adolescence from the symptomatological point of view, one is confronted with the inability to classify these symptoms, for types of conduct are not clearly defined and they flow freely from one group to another. Thus temper outbursts may be associated with stealing, shyness, or jealousy; various types of nervous mannerisms may be seen with or without any basic conduct problem; and inferiority feelings may manifest themselves in illness, delinquency, daydreaming, a stalwart attitude of being right while the world is all wrong, or other unexpected and unrelated ways. This presentation is therefore not intended to be exhaustive or conclusive; it should, however, be suggestive of the meaning of some of this undesirable behavior, and of its relation to situations in the family and the immediate environment.

The group of cases first to be presented are examples of individuals exhibiting definite, isolated bits of conduct which may be extremely annoying to others, often without causing the individual himself much concern or having much effect on his adjustment to life. They include



## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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nail-biting, bed-wetting, various antics and mannerisms such as snuffling, blinking the eyes, jerking the neck, and stammering. Such conduct is often but a carry-over of a childish habit which had its origin in a mental conflict over some situation that has long since ceased to be operative. Or instead of being carried over directly from childhood to adolescence, it may be interrupted by a period of months, sometimes years, recurring during adolescence under certain emotional situations having associations reverting back to earlier experiences or under situations having excessive mental stress or physical strain in themselves.

*Frederick* at the age of twelve years was making a great nuisance of himself in his boarding school by his habit of bed-wetting. His dormitory master was concerned, however, not only with the problem as it upset the domestic economy of the dormitory, but also with its significance in the boy's personality development, and therefore wrote to Frederick's mother, requesting her permission to refer the boy to a psychiatrist. Part of her reply to this is being quoted as it indicates strikingly the mother's own attitude toward the problem.

... I am more or less inclined to believe that Frederick's trouble is purely habit. Perhaps there is a little weakness also. I think he wets his bed at home just about as frequently as you say he does at school. I have had many doctors try to cure him but to no avail. . . .

I have spoken to several friends of mine whose sons have had the same trouble. They told me they, too, thought it was simply habit as, when their sons reached about the age of fifteen, the embarrassment of it caused them to think of it more keenly and to make up their minds to break themselves of it.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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Frederick had apparently never assumed any responsibility for keeping himself dry. Whatever responsibility had been assumed in the matter, had been for occasional brief periods assumed for him by his mother save on one occasion when the boy was working for an allowance. But probably his needs and wants were so adequately met without this allowance that he was quite able to do without it, or, possibly he was too lazy and comfort-loving to make the necessary effort to earn the money even through it was desirable to him.

After a long discussion with the boy about matters of general interest, the question of bed-wetting was brought up in a casual way. He was told that a boy with his intelligence and his recognized ability on the playground would have to solve the problem for himself—that it was a job that no one could do for him. He was assured that if he became interested, he could successfully accomplish the task. Considerable time was spent first in making him see the job as worth while; secondly, in assuring him that he was capable of doing it; and thirdly, in helping him to see that he would get satisfaction out of the effort as well as out of the end result.<sup>4</sup>

The first week was successful, and Frederick was encouraged and enthusiastic. For two months this state of affairs continued, and then Frederick went home for a vacation. On his return to school he slumped immediately, wetting his bed five times in two weeks. He was sent back to the psychiatrist and confessed that he had wet the bed every night during his vacation. In other words, the minute he returned to his home environment,

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<sup>4</sup>Such an approach should be made, of course, only when all possibility of physical defect has been eliminated.

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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he ceased to assume responsibility for himself; he felt that it was not expected of him, and as his new habits had not been permanently established, a relapse was inevitable.

*Malcolm* came to the doctor with his mother. She was noticeably anxious about this thirteen-year-old boy, describing him as a "very nervous child" having many "nervous mannerisms." She reported that although he had no obvious undesirable habits or personality traits, he was very irritable with his two younger sisters, and that while he was reading—and he read a good deal—he would fidget, bite his finger nails, and continually twist and squirm around; she had also observed that he twisted his neck around when walking. The mother seemed very much concerned over all these manifestations and evidently spent much time worrying over them.

When *Malcolm* came into the office it was almost impossible to believe that this was the boy whom the mother had described. He seemed to be perfectly poised, was not for a moment at a loss for words, and did not give the slightest evidence of nervous mannerisms. After some general conversation about his interests the question of his nervousness was raised and he at once replied, without any shyness, "Well, no one but mother ever thinks that I am nervous. Father is always telling her to stop talking about it."

On carefully going over the stories told by the boy and by the mother several factors of importance were revealed. *Malcolm's* story agreed with his mother's on the point of his reading a great deal; *Malcolm* confessed that he often read so much that his eyes would get twitchy. It also appeared that he spent a great deal of

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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time alone, either reading, or building something with his mechanical set, in either of which occupations the intrusion of his two little sisters, the only other children in the family, was naturally unwelcome and resulted in the irritability which caused his mother so much anxiety. When he was not doing things alone, he was likely to be doing something with his mother who took great pleasure in her chummy relationship with her oldest child and only son. On these occasions, however, he was constantly subjected to her solicitous observation of him and indeed it was a great wonder that she had not succeeded in making him "sickly" and "delicate" as well as "nervous."

It is quite obvious that the problem for which the mother brought the boy to the physician was not the outstanding or important problem at all. This perfectly normal, healthy boy was building his life around two or three special interests to the exclusion of everything else. It was well indeed that he should read and exercise his mechanical ingenuity and have a happy and pleasant relationship with his mother, but he was doing all this to the exclusion of building up his social relations with young people of his own age and interests.

Malcolm's parents were advised that every effort be made to bring their son into closer contact with boys of his own age, both at home and elsewhere; that group play should have at least part of the time that was being devoted to reading and attending his mother; and that the latter's over-solicitude, which was exaggerating many of the boy's symptoms, be replaced by efforts to help both become more independent of each other.

This case presented an opportunity of helping a parent who was extremely desirous of doing all she could for

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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her son but who was actually building up many crippling influences about him. She had to learn to devote her efforts not to tying this boy up with her emotionally but to directing him toward that outside world in which he would have to learn to live in order to be happy in his personal relationships.

*Josephine* was always regarded as an exceptionally gifted and exceptionally excitable and nervous child. At the age of twelve years she was causing her parents some concern because her habit of stammering seemed to be growing worse.

There were no other children in the family and therefore Josephine had an unusually good opportunity to hear her superiority and exceptional qualities discussed by her parents, who considered her exceptionally musical and artistic and were always pleased to show off her ability to sing, play the piano, or draw. They also encouraged her to cultivate a conscious sophistication about things artistic and a conscious worship of the beautiful.

Her stammering was not the only evidence of the fact that she had been under a good deal of pressure to live up to the glorified conception of what she was. She had also developed the habit of nail-biting and was very quick-tempered.

In this situation the stammering, nail-biting, and temper were but evidence of a general nervous condition brought about by too much mental strain and emotional stress. Treatment of the stammering involved readjustment of the whole situation in which the girl was living, and the attitude of the parents toward their own ambitions for her.

When stammering begins early in life and is continued

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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through adolescence, it represents one of the most difficult handicaps for treatment, and the individual's attitude toward the handicap is often the most important aspect of the entire situation. All too frequently one finds the treatment directed in such a way as to exaggerate rather than to minimize the individual's attitude toward the problem.

*Hazel* was brought to the psychiatrist because of her habit of weeping on the slightest provocation. Her mother reported that the habit of crying easily dated back to babyhood, but that it seemed to be growing worse. In addition to finding the habit unbecoming in a girl of fifteen, the family were beginning to lose patience.

The mother described *Hazel* as a "level-headed, broad-minded, comfortable sort of girl," getting on well with every one, and having a natural cheerfulness and a desire to make the best of things. *Hazel* appeared to have normal wholesome interests. She enjoyed companionship, liked out-of-door sports, and expressed considerable pleasure over her increasing success in bridge.

In spite of the fact that this girl had what would be called an adequate personality, many interests, plenty of activities, and a happy home relationship with her mother and her two older brothers, she was constantly in tears. Slight disappointments, fatigue, minor frictions in the family, inability to have her own way, and even a mere discussion of her habit of weeping, were all met with fresh outbursts of tears.

It was also learned, however, that *Hazel* had had considerable physical illness of one type and another which had kept her in contact with physicians and produced an over-solicitous attitude on the part of her mother. Her problem was therefore approached on the basis of its being

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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evidence of immaturity in an individual otherwise living up to, and in many respects beyond, her age, and as being exaggerated by the attitude of the family towards the problem. It was solved in a relatively short time by the same method as that used in treating problems of enuresis; namely, by getting the girl to look upon herself as stronger than her habit; by appreciating and pointing out certain motives that might well lie behind the habit, such as getting attention; and by stressing the fact that such devices are not necessary in the life of an individual who is otherwise adequate.

It has already been pointed out that no two people react to the same situation exactly alike. If the quality of the reaction is similar or identical, there will be variations in the quantitative aspect of the reaction. One individual who is reproached or criticized becomes angry; this is the type of person who is apt to believe that the best defense is a strong offense. Another individual becomes sullen, says nothing, and maintains the attitude of the grouch for a longer or shorter period. Tears are associated with fear, anger, and joy, as well as with sorrow. Adolescents, especially girls, not infrequently react to criticism by being hurt rather than angered, and in a certain group of individuals weeping gets to be a habit unassociated with any depth of emotion. It may as in this case be a carrying over of the normal childish response, or it may be an indirect way of sublimating new energies and emotions that have not yet found their proper outlet. As an habitual response it should certainly be discarded, for all too frequently one sees it becoming an important part of adult life, causing discomfort, embarrassment, and annoyance to all concerned.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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In contrast to such cases as these with their quite definite and specific manifestations, the next group illustrates a more general poor adjustment to the home, school, or college. Individuals in this group are comparable to patients who, while not feeling well, complain of no specific symptom; and yet the astute physician can frequently see a direct relationship between their poor feeling tone and their composite daily routines of living—the amount and type of work they do, their exercise, their program of recreation, their hours of sleep, and their general hygiene.

*Frank* was a fifteen-year-old boy whose parents reported that he seemed discontented and unhappy. For two years he had been growing increasingly surly and discourteous at home; he lost his temper frequently, and over trivial matters.

This boy had a sister, eight years of age, and a brother, aged four, with whom he got on very well. He liked companionship but it was apparent that he found it difficult to make advances to other children. Therefore, he was thrown back upon himself to a great extent, and indulged in much daydreaming which tended to lessen his former keen interest in reading, and to lead him to complain of having difficulty in concentrating.

Frank was two years retarded in school and was doing such poor work in his class that there was danger of his having to repeat it. His repetition of the seventh grade had been due to a prolonged absence with influenza from which he had barely recovered before succumbing to a second attack. The non-promotion had been very painful to him and he had promptly begun to entertain the idea that he was "dumb." His subsequent efforts in school seemed to substantiate this opinion. He found it diffi-



## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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cult enough to see the boys of his class advance and leave him behind, but he found it even more difficult to be doing poor work in a grade which he was repeating.

The father had but little contact with the boy. He occasionally tried to stimulate him to do better work by comparing him with his sister. The mother was extremely irritable and quite impatient with what she regarded as Frank's change of attitude at home. And the atmosphere of the home was becoming very tense.

A psychological examination seemed to be a great relief to the boy. He had concluded that his troubles were due to some deficiency, and the discovery that his "mind" was not only normal but superior was a joyous revelation to him. A change of schools was recommended as helpful in giving the boy a new start and the whole situation was discussed in detail with the headmaster of the new school. The parents were made to see that the boy's undesirable conduct was not due to viciousness, but to confusion over some of the most important issues in his life.

After a few consultations the boy got a new perspective on life. Renewed confidence in his ability helped him to get the necessary emotional stability to enable him to use his intellectual equipment to better advantage. With a more objective point of view on his failures he realized that they were not as important as he had believed and he could see his way clear to avoid them in the future.

All these steps worked out to the boy's advantage and he soon began to meet his responsibilities successfully.

*Norma* was a college sophomore who was creating an unfavorable impression on the students, the head of her dormitory, and various members of the faculty because of

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

her disagreeable disposition and fiery temper. She seemed quite unable to stand any opposition to her own particular wishes and became so disagreeable whenever she was crossed in any way that she lost favor with all her associates.

This student at first resented being referred to the psychiatrist, and came to her first interview in an uncommunicative mood. Finally, however, she discussed some of her problems. She confessed that she had found it a difficult job during her first year to fit into college life. College, as she had found it, had seemed to require many changes—some of these changes being general and desirable for all colleges, and others being more definitely local. Norma explained that her feelings about this matter had probably not been particularly different from those of other students, but she had made the mistake of trying to effect a reform. She had always been extremely exacting and insistent as to the rightness and wrongness of things, and, in applying her standards to other people, she had developed a very critical and fault-finding attitude.

Norma also made a statement which is rather commonly heard among young college students; namely, she had come to college only to satisfy her parents, and that she had no interest whatsoever in the work she was doing.

In the course of her discussions with the psychiatrist, however, this student acquired good insight into her own problem and set about finding a way of getting more satisfaction out of life for herself and at the same time causing less annoyance to other people. She found her outlet in dramatics, and from the day when she entered wholeheartedly into this new activity, she made a very good

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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adjustment to college life. After graduating she became a teacher in a public school where her superintendent was able to report of her, "Teacher of good personality, who holds the respect of her pupils. Scholarship, ability and discipline good, and character excellent."

*Lillian*, a fourteen-year-old youngster who was doing good work in the eighth grade, was another child who was failing to find adequate satisfaction in her home relationships and was described by her mother as being "extremely unhappy." Like the boy Frank, already described, she was given to violent tempers, and like Norma, in the preceding case, she had a critical faultfinding attitude toward others, particularly toward her parents. The girl's mother, a woman of fifty-eight years, said that Lillian had always been a "difficult" child but that she was growing more and more "mean" to her parents and seemed to lose no opportunity to humiliate them. Lillian was particularly disgruntled over the family economic situation and seemed to find some relief for her dissatisfaction by being unpleasant to her parents.

This girl was a good swimmer and diver and had an appreciative interest in music, so that she was not without points of contact with other children. She seemed to be very prudish about boys, however, and tried not only to avoid them, but to keep away from girls who were likely to discuss boys or display any interest in them. Consequently she got little enjoyment out of her contacts in school and stated that she was quite at a loss to know what to do with her leisure.

The cause of this chronic state of discontent was presently revealed by the girl herself. She had become extremely jealous of the attention which both her parents

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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(and grandparents) showed toward an older, mentally deficient brother. Lillian had come to feel that the entire family life revolved about this boy and that he not only received the major portion of the family's interest, time, attention, and affection, but also used up more than his share of the family income.

As will be pointed out later, all too frequently parents neglect the healthy, normal members of the family in their misguided grief over the weak, defective or aged members of the family.

Adolescents whose conflicts with life and with their immediate situation find expression in such behavior as has just been considered—*i.e.*, annoying or vexatious or worrisome conduct manifestations—are invariably better off, however, than are the individuals who accept their situation with outward submission and meekness, meanwhile finding an indirect outlet for their conflict in some form of behavior which may attract but little attention from others and give little offense, but may at the same time be fundamentally harmful to the healthy mental development of the individual. No matter how undesirable temper tantrums may be as a form of social behavior, the child who manifests his resentment toward parental authority with temper tantrums, and annoys and disrupts his family is invariably better off, so far as his mental health is concerned than is the child who resorts to a phantasy in which he obtains revenge to the utmost limit in a land of unreality. For the temper tantrums will be observed and may prove so annoying to others that steps will be taken to help the individual get over this habit. But the retreat into phantasy may not be observed, or, if

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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observed, is likely to be dismissed inasmuch as it causes no great annoyance to others.

As one might expect, parents and society in general are more vitally concerned with the conduct of the individual than with his feelings and state of mind. His conduct affects other people's comfort—and casts reflections on his parental background and training—but his own thoughts and feelings interfere primarily with only his own comfort and happiness; and, therefore, these thoughts and feelings are often ignored so long as they do not manifest themselves in objectionable conduct. It is only when the welfare of the adolescent becomes of genuine concern to the parent—or teacher—or when otherwise unobjectionable behavior reaches some dramatic climax, that these less direct and more subtle behavior reactions come to light.

There are numerous forms of behavior which individuals of all ages find socially acceptable forms of expressing their inner conflicts, without finding satisfactory solutions to their problems or making an adequate adjustment to their situation. One of the more common methods among adolescents is through "romancing."

Romancing may be defined as an attempt on the part of the individual to bolster up his self-regard and the esteem in which he desires to be held by his associates by fabricating tales which lend interest to his career, add affluence or distinction to his family background, and in general exaggerate his own importance. It is but daydreaming aloud.

Both daydreaming and romancing serve the same purpose in the life of the individual, and although romancing is more likely to bring the individual into conflict with

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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society, it is a less dangerous method of compensating for feelings of inadequacy, for, by the nature of the activity, it has the advantage of being detectable before it becomes too deeply rooted in the personality make-up of the individual.

*Eunice* was a fourteen-year-old girl whose physical unattractiveness and colorless personality would have made her inconspicuous among her schoolmates had it not been for the fact that she enlarged her family background so as to make it intensely interesting to a group of adolescent girls. She created for herself three brothers, who existed only in fancy: One was a young aviator, another a student at Annapolis, and a third a student at West Point. She also transformed her father, who was a simple business man, into a rear admiral, and showed her companions photographs of attractive young men which she said were pictures of her brothers.

This romancing continued without coming to the attention of the school authorities for almost a year. By that time *Eunice* was, however, beginning to find herself in a predicament. The promised visits of her fascinating relatives were failing to materialize. Then, one by one, the various members of this resourceful young person's family were disposed of: The midshipman was drowned, the aviator was killed in an airplane accident, and the cadet met his death through an injury on the football field. That such tragic fates should overtake these splendid creatures was naturally a great blow to the girls who had been interested in them, and created considerable stir among the pupils in *Eunice's* school. *Eunice* herself was the object of much sympathy and attention, and the entire situation caused sufficient excitement and disturbance to

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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give the principal and other members of the school staff cause for anxiety.

A similar case is that of *Arthur*, a young lad who had been very popular and quite happy in a small boarding school. He was for various reasons obliged to transfer to a larger school where competition was more keen, and where he had few acquaintances and no intimate friends. He soon realized that wealth and social position were among the most effective means of gaining recognition among his new classmates and so he began, in a very casual way, to build up an imaginary background of great affluence. He spoke of summer and winter homes and mentioned trips in the family's palatial yacht, and presently he began to issue attractive invitations to his classmates to spend vacations on the yacht with him.

Like Eunice, he gained considerable attention and recognition which doubtless he would not otherwise have received. And like Eunice, he eventually came to the attention of the school authorities by being unable to produce the objects his imagination had created.

It was not a particularly difficult task to help these two young people get a better perspective with reference to their own problems and to appreciate that they were endeavoring to obtain in a passive sort of way the recognition which can only come through active effort. Eunice was encouraged to cultivate a latent interest in tennis and by dint of her zealous efforts she soon met with modest but gratifying success. Arthur took advantage of an opportunity to take a trip with several adults whose rugged program inspired him to demonstrate his own courage and perseverance with even greater satisfaction than he had found in his day-dreams and phantasies.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

In both these cases the adolescents were succeeding in representing themselves to their companions as being more glamorous than they were in reality. In the process of daydreaming, on the other hand, individuals merely succeeded in seeing themselves as more glamorous and their actions as more gratifying than they are in reality. The adolescent boy and girl see themselves enjoying the affection, physical comforts and luxuries, attention and admiration of which they feel they have been deprived; they see themselves achieving great things, being successful in business, winning fame as artists, actors, athletes, aviators, musicians, or politicians, making great discoveries or inventing valuable instruments; and they romance about love, about the real boy and girl whom they admire at the moment, about unattainable famous adults, or about a non-existent ideal: security, achievement or success, and love are the situations which they embroider about themselves in their dreams.

Daydreaming is indulged in at some time or other by almost everybody and need not be a dangerous pastime for the adolescent. These dreams are not always undesirable. They may spur the adolescent on to harder work and nobler ambitions; they may serve as a mental rehearsal, preparing to carry out in his actions what he sees himself doing in his daydreams; and they may stimulate his creative imagination. It is only when he prefers his daydreams to normal play contacts with other boys and girls of his age, or when he finds in them a refuge and a means of consolation for all his failures, that he is allowing them to occupy too important a place in his life.

This brief discussion must be accepted as merely indicative of how the various minor, undesirable conduct



## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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reactions originate and the purpose they serve in the life of the individual. It is not possible here to enumerate all the forms of undesirable behavior, tracing their possible origins and motivation. The reader may be able to see for himself how selfishness, greediness, insincerity, over-inquisitiveness, and whatever else, are like the manifestations already discussed, but symptoms of some more deep-seated problem. To discover what this fundamental problem is or how it is to be treated is the task confronting the parent, teacher, and all others interested in human behavior.

There is, however, one more "symptom" well worth discussing here. It is primarily subjective in that it is not so much something the adolescent does as something that seems to happen to him. Even though it is not one of those unacceptable forms of conduct, objectionable to both parents and society, it causes parents anxiety and to a certain extent society manifests concern over it. It is friendlessness.

One of the most pathetic individuals in the world is the adolescent without friends. In early childhood, parents, brothers, sisters, casual acquaintances, and imaginary playmates can be substituted for intimate friendships. In adulthood, a philosophical outlook on life, and an engrossing interest in one's family, in business, art, music, sports, or in various hobbies can make life fairly tolerable, but when it first dawns upon the adolescent that he is without intimate contacts of his own age, that he has no one with whom to share the joys and the sorrows of life, it is nothing short of a calamity. For with this realization of friendlessness comes the conviction that the individual is without the ability to make friends. He has as yet no

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

substitute in the form of a dominant interest, and the philosophical outlook has yet to be built up.

As one sees these unhappy individuals, who often keep the fact that they are without friends to themselves since they feel that such an admission further reflects upon themselves and their worthlessness, one wonders by what force of circumstances individuals of such sterling worth could be passed by unnoticed. In seeking the cause, one is thrown back to circumstances and conditions surrounding the early life of such boys and girls.

It is true that there are certain individuals who from birth seem to reach out and grasp for the hand of every passer-by, whose desire to be friendly and affectionate is quite contagious, while there are those who seem to shrink from personal contacts, pull themselves away, and resent any intrusion on their privacy. Yet the ability to make friends and the fact of having them are brought about largely by the early experiences of the individual.

The great majority of young adolescents without friends are shy, diffident, retiring, self-conscious, and inclined to be introspective as they are constantly analyzing their feelings toward others, trying to evaluate their abilities, and comparing themselves with their associates, invariably to their own disadvantage. They are a part of the group who suffer from feelings of inferiority—although by no means all those who feel inferior are without friends.

Searching back into the early histories of the friendless individuals, one finds all manner of situations responsible for the inability to make friends. Sometimes it is a too intimate family relationship in which a child was the victim of too much mothering and everything was made so

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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easy and pleasant at home, and the parents derived so much emotional satisfaction from the relationship, that the child never had any incentive to venture forth, and was never urged to broaden his contacts with people. It takes but a few years of such a life to incapacitate an individual seriously for developing contacts in the world outside. The five-year-old with a three-year-old attitude is a misfit even in the playground.

Sometimes frequent, or long-continued, illness has created for the moment at least a real problem in the social development of the child and, unless an effort is made by parents to compensate in some way for these interruptions in the contacts with the world outside, he will be at a disadvantage later on. The child who has an organic heart disturbance, or infantile paralysis with permanent residuals, or any chronic illness, may need special consideration in order to overcome a handicap in the development of friendships.

Occasionally it is found that the first evidence of difficulty in making friendships followed the interruption of an intimate and long-continued attachment in which a couple of boys—more frequently girls—have devoted most of their time and attention to one another to the exclusion of others. A quarrel between them, the moving of one family, or one child's going away to school brings to light the evidence of dependency and inability to meet the new situation. When these all-absorbing relationships are seen in their early stages, effort should be wisely directed in broadening the scope of the contacts of both parties concerned. Some one is invariably hurt if this is not done.

One might go on to enumerate many other situations

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

representing real handicaps to the child in his effort to become a part of the world surrounding him. Making friends is an important part of life and every stumbling block that would tend to interfere with the enjoyment of this privilege should be removed.

The following situations briefly cited from the lives of a few adolescents bring out several factors.

*Ada* was a sixteen-year-old girl who was extremely shy and diffident and found it difficult to make a place for herself with other girls in spite of the fact that she was attractive, bright, and had a keen desire for friendships.

*Ada's* early childhood had been spent with her grandmother who was the type of person who hated noise and could not bear to be in a room where conversation was going on in which she was not taking part. *Ada's* father was said to be a man who hated to have more than one person around at a time. Both of these individuals were domineering, and both of them resented any question of their authority.

It is not surprising that *Ada*, living in such an environment where initiative and self-confidence were frowned upon, and where she was constantly being impressed by these two older people to whom the spontaneity of youth was objectionable in a refined young lady, became shy and diffident, and that her self-esteem did not rise to a very high level when she came in contact with a group of girls, most of whom had been led to believe that self-confidence was an extremely important asset.

There is no reason to believe that *Ada* was fundamentally different from her associates, but her personality and the traits which she developed were conditioned by these early experiences. A realization of how her early

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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environment had affected her present attitude toward some of the ordinary, everyday problems which she was endeavoring to meet was extremely helpful in getting this young person to develop the self-confidence and self-assurance that was necessary in her relationship with other people. The idea that she had entertained that she was biologically inferior and that nothing could be done about it, was completely dissipated and in the course of a comparatively few months she became a much happier and more efficient individual.

*Miriam* was a young college student who was unhappy because she felt that she was not well liked by others. She had a marked feeling of inferiority about her class work, and was described by her teachers as follows: "Has a very shut-in personality"; "feels she is not appreciated"; "is timid and retiring with occasional outbursts of being exceedingly rude."

This girl came from a home where the family had always been extremely critical and had set standards so high that it was difficult for her to live up to them with any degree of satisfaction to herself or family. At school, she had always projected the family attitude on the teachers and other students, and her habit of entertaining the idea that she was not being appreciated was but a defense against what she was anticipating from the school in the way of criticism which she had always received at home.

*Hugh* was a thirteen-year-old boy who seemed quite unable to get on with the other boys in his school. He was a fat, unattractive-looking boy with a somewhat effeminate manner which made him the subject of much teasing, and, as he stated, many "dirty digs" from his

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

classmates. He was a nervous, timid, unimaginative individual whose principal outlet in life was study, which he pursued in a diligent, industrious manner. He might have passed by unnoticed and avoided the teasing and tormenting, if he had not developed a very objectionable manner of attempting to make himself a rather prominent part of every activity that was going on about the school. He had an opinion regarding every subject that was under discussion. He pushed himself in where it was quite obvious he was not wanted, and he seemed entirely lacking in those finer sensibilities which would have given him insight into just how far he could go in forcing himself upon others. This outstanding objectionable trait stood between him and any possibility he might have had in making friends, and in spite of the fact that much of his difficulty he had brought upon himself, he was still very sensitive about being ignored and snubbed by the other boys.

In the course of two years a great deal was done for this boy in helping him to overcome his undesirable social traits. He went out one day and met one of his persecutors in a respectable battle which had the desirable effect of raising him in the opinion of the boys who witnessed the fight, and also of practically ending the persecutions. He continued going quietly about his business, making himself as inconspicuous as possible and he began to find life much more tolerable.

Although Hugh never advanced to the point of making real friendships in school, he was able to fit into the group without attracting undesirable attention and was taken up as an acquaintance by many of the leading boys in the school. There is every reason to believe that by the time

## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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he enters college, he will be able to put himself across in a satisfactory way.

*Rebecca* was referred to the psychiatrist by her school advisor because of her uncontrollable temper. Her conduct was generally poor and she was lacking in emotional control. She stated that she was unpopular with her fellow students, and the real problem was her feeling of inferiority over being one of the few Jewish students in the school. She felt that her race was being discriminated against, that she was not being given a fair show, and that any effort she might make would never be recognized, much less rewarded.

Considerable time and effort were devoted in helping this girl get a proper perspective on her problem and in pointing out to her the necessity of taking pride in her race which was justified, and anticipating a square deal from all those with whom she came in contact. She had made herself so unpopular, however, in the school she was attending, that it seemed advisable to transfer her to another school and to offer her an environment in which to begin anew and apply in a practical way the new insight which she had acquired into her own personality. She made the most of this opportunity and it was not long before she settled down to a happier, well-adjusted school life.

*Elena* was another student who found a real handicap in making friendships. Although not shy, diffident, or shut in, like some of the other adolescents described, she had developed extreme sensitiveness over her increasing deafness and felt that she must be annoying to other people.

This girl was described by those who knew her best as

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

"very sweet and lovable," and she was obviously well liked by her associates. She had, however, become unduly sensitive about this deafness which she had never been willing to face frankly, and she had already begun to build her life around the handicap and so to exaggerate it as to make other people feel very much aware of her own attitude towards it.

In dealing with this fundamentally stable, well-adjusted individual, it was not difficult to help her meet her problem frankly and to avoid the common mistake of becoming so self-conscious and sensitive that she would eventually cut herself off from all those contacts which were most worth while and which she most needed.

The desire for popularity and for the ability to meet people easily and make friends readily is so dominant a human trait that it is one of the outstanding methods of "appeal" in advertising. The "magazine-reading" adolescent knows without any psychiatric assistance that popularity comes to those who use the right soaps, deodorants, and cigarettes, who follow the advertised rules of etiquette, and take the prescribed correspondence courses in French, world literature, English grammar, mandolin playing or dancing! He may not learn from the advertisements, however, that cleanliness and personal and social fastidiousness, important as they are in making and maintaining personal relationships, are matters to be taken for granted in modern civilized life. The democracy which permits the adolescent from an unsophisticated and culturally simple environment to compete on equal terms with the well-bred adolescent coming from a highly exacting and socially circumscribed environment must



## Undesirable Habits and Traits

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inevitably offer to the former the means of concealing his inadequacies from the latter. Parents, brothers and sisters, fellow schoolmates, and teachers may consciously and unconsciously share in helping him acquire these important but after all superficial earmarks of the socially acceptable individual. The correction of undesirable habits, personality traits, and attitudes requires more thoughtful and intelligent effort, and not infrequently the advice and assistance of some one with special training, experience, or native wisdom in the ways of human beings.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONDUCT PROBLEMS, II: DELINQUENCY, NEUROSES, AND OTHER FORMS OF ESCAPE FROM REALITY

**I**N the process of meeting the new responsibilities which confront the adolescent, and living up to the obligations which family and society demand as youth advances toward maturity, all the habits, personality traits, and mental attitudes toward life are tested out, so to speak, in order to determine whether or not they are adequate to serve the needs of the particular individual and his particular situation.

It is the unusual individual who does not find it necessary to discard some of his habits and modify his attitudes and his reactions to various aspects of life in the light of his own experience. And, in view of the fact that oftentimes the situations and conditions from which he has gathered knowledge and experience in the past are quite different from those confronting him at the moment, he is frequently obliged to develop new modes of behavior and new responses for new situations.

The necessity of adjusting our reactions to each new situation goes on all through life, beginning in infancy and continuing to old age. But, as was indicated in earlier chapters, the adolescent decade of life is peculiar in that it usually offers the individual a greater variety of new experiences and usually finds him less well prepared to meet these than any other decade in life.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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During this period, whether it be spent at home, in college, at boarding school, in the office, or in a factory, there will invariably be times of emotional stress when the demands of some situation appear excessive and unbearable. Notwithstanding the fact that most adolescents pass through this testing-out period safely, many—either because of some organic inferiority or weakness, or a particularly unfavorable environmental background, or an unusual situation to be met, or a combination of these factors—find the emotional stress and strain just beyond their capacity for endurance.

There are many ways in which the organism may respond when the breaking point is reached and there are various levels of regression. All individuals do not retreat in the same direction or use the same means of escape from their problems, but they all retreat for the same fundamental purpose. It is a mechanism providing protection. Some individuals can find adequate protection only in a psychosis in which they withdraw to a life within, cutting themselves off from contact with the world of action outside. Others find safety just behind the lines of action in a neurosis. Others find an outlet in conduct of a recognizably asocial nature; *e.g.*, destroying or appropriating to themselves other people's property. Still others, demanding relief, seek escape in drugs, alcohol, or orgies of one kind and another.

### DELINQUENCY

It is generally agreed by those who have studied and investigated the careers of criminals—whether they be psychologists, psychiatrists, criminologists, penologists, or

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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sociologists—that the only real contribution to the solution of the crime must come through knowledge leading to prevention rather than through reform. The most recent investigations indicate that methods of reform existing to-day even when carried out under the best of conditions are pitifully inadequate. The Gluecks, in their study of *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, state, “. . . Four-fifths of the ex-inmates of the Massachusetts Reformatory have turned out to be failures so far as their post-parole criminality record is concerned.”<sup>1</sup> This statement bears no reflection on the Massachusetts Reformatory, but is damning evidence against the system now in vogue for the purpose of reconstructing the lives of these offenders against social law and order—most of them young in years but old in their asocial activities. Dr. Richard Cabot, in his foreword to this remarkable book, strikes a pessimistic note, when he states, “I am not at all sure that the men studied in this book could have been reformed by any methods now known, no matter how much money and intelligence were spent upon them. Perhaps this type of crime is a symptom of a self-limited disease of personality, which ordinarily runs its course during the years from sixteen to thirty-five or forty and cannot be checked by any remedies yet found. I believe that society is here confronting a problem too difficult for any wisdom yet existent.”<sup>2</sup>

One must keep in mind that the reformatory population which the Gluecks studied, and the group to which Doctor Cabot refers in his introduction were, as already

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<sup>1</sup> Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck, *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Richard C. Cabot, Foreword to Glueck, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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stated, not having their first experience with crime when they entered the reformatory. Fifty-one per cent had come in conflict with society prior to the age of ten and 77 per cent at the age of sixteen or earlier. Over half the families of these juvenile offenders had records of arrests or commitment. The great majority came from families in marginal circumstances. Seventy per cent came from disorganized or broken homes. Eighty per cent had left home prior to their sentence to the reformatory. And the presence of numerous other factors—such as mental deficiency, psychoses, and generally inadequate personalities—indicated that to a large extent these individuals were not only the product of their early environment, but also in many cases were biologically inferior.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to deal with this particular group of delinquents. They represent the end products of long-continued asocial activity and are analogous to the cases of mental disease seen in our institutions for the chronic insane. We are concerned with those adolescent cases presenting early evidences of asocial activity which, if prolonged or exaggerated, would bring the individual into conflict not only with his family and his immediate group, but with society in general.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, and other specialists interested in human behavior are cognizant of the fact that various types of delinquency are not infrequently utilized, both consciously and unconsciously, in an attempt to meet the varied demands that life imposes upon the individual. Less generally recognized, however—particularly by parents, teachers, and other important lay groups who are responsible for the equipment which the

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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child has for meeting life during the adolescent period—is the importance of training the child to meet the simpler issues of life frankly and not building up methods of self-deception by which to bridge ordinary everyday difficulties.

It is well to keep in mind that much of the information available about the juvenile delinquent and the criminal has been the result of studies and investigations of a rather selected group who have come to the attention of some public agency; *e.g.*, the juvenile court, reformatories, detention homes, psychiatric clinics, and similar organizations. It is therefore to be expected that an extremely high per cent come from a rather sordid background of poverty, vice, broken homes, mental deficiency, illegitimacy, alcoholism, and all those disintegrating forces productive of social problems. But this does not mean that problems of delinquency and crime do not occur in other social strata.

The means and method by which a case of juvenile delinquency is managed and which determine whether or not the individual becomes known to the community as a delinquent is to a very large extent dependent upon (1) the economic situation of the parents, (2) the reputation the family may enjoy in the community as law-abiding citizens, (3) the amount of pressure that may be exerted on public officials to “whitewash” the case, and (4) the facilities available to deal with the case in other than the old orthodox method of punishment.

John Jones, a boy fifteen years old, from the congested district of one of our large cities, is brought into court for stealing an automobile tire which he sold for two dollars. John has been in touch with police before for truancy,

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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breaking windows, and selling papers without a license. The morning he appears in court, he is unhappy, rebellious, "fed up on life," and he makes a poor impression on the judge who has found out that John's father is an alcoholic, irregular in his work, and generally irresponsible toward his family. John's mother is an honest, hard-working woman, who, in spite of John's trouble, has done a good job with her family.

John is given an indefinite sentence in the reformatory which, as has been shown, fails in its function of reforming.

What happens to Tom Smith, another fourteen-year-old boy, who, like John, is a "good fellow," normal in physical and intellectual development, whose father happens to be the head of a large and prosperous business?

Tom has had his adolescent flare-ups. On two occasions within six months, he has gone out with older boys and stayed away from home all night. While his family is in the South for their winter vacation, he takes his father's car, and such boys and girls as he can gather about him, on frequent joy rides. In order to finance these trips he takes money from his aunt who is acting as head of the house while the family is away. All this activity is, of course, within the family, and it is not until Tom takes a car belonging to some one else, on a dare as he later explains, that he really gets into trouble, and then only for the moment. His father has no difficulty in "fixing up the matter" with the owner of the car which Tom has borrowed for his party. But he is concerned about Tom's future, and what he is going to be in for in the future if such conduct is continued. He is advised to see a psychiatrist.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

Tom is looked upon by the psychiatrist as a perfectly normal youngster who needs more interests and closer supervision than his busy parents give him or are capable of giving him. The boy appreciates the immaturity of his conduct. He sees clearly that he has been playing to the grandstand, seeking applause at every turn. He is also helped to see that with his intellectual ability, athletic interests, and pleasing personality he can put himself across on a much higher level. So plans are made for Tom to go to a good boarding school where the headmaster has an interest in this type of boy and will see that he makes interesting and intimate contacts and finds his satisfactions in meeting life frankly. This solution is excellent for Tom—simple, constructive, and productive of results.

But the solution of John's problem is entirely destructive. Complicated by court proceedings, creating in the boy a desire to get even with society, unproductive of any good in four cases out of five, his treatment leaves him in a state of mind in which little can be done for him after he leaves the reformatory.

A more obvious and more flagrant example of the difference in treating similar problems is the case of the sexually delinquent girl. When a girl with a socially secure and economically comfortable position in life becomes pregnant, she is "taken care of," and for the time being her program is rearranged to permit a brief recess with possibly a period in a hospital or a trip abroad. On her recovery, she resumes her social obligations and presently one may read a newspaper account of plans for her wedding. But to the young shopgirl, pregnancy may be fraught with tragic consequences: Her efforts to secure,



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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or herself induce, an abortion may be unsuccessful or even fatal; through actual physical illness or because of her "ruined reputation" she may lose her job; she may in despair commit suicide. Although she may be sent to a "house of refuge" where society will make plans for her own rehabilitation and for the future of her "illegitimate child," giving her an opportunity to "live down her shame," she may decide, in a spirit of bravado to "play the game," now that she "has the name."

The problem of delinquency, like all problems in which human beings are involved, does not lend itself well to broad generalizations. It is safe to say, however, that there is an innate tendency that is constant and progressive, leading toward the socialization of the individual, and that asocial activity, like growing pains, should be self-eliminating. One comes to this conclusion after a long experience with adolescents in difficulty, whose delinquencies have been known only to those within the family circle, and to those whom they have offended.

All too frequently, the psychiatrist and other specialists in the field of medicine are given credit for successes and cures which just naturally occur in the process of growing up. The less drastic the means for dealing with the ordinary delinquencies of adolescence, the more satisfactory and permanent will be the results.

The present-day tendency of many self-styled specialists in the field of human behavior<sup>3</sup> to interpret every thought, word, and deed in terms of some deep, underlying, disintegrating emotional conflict is not only absurd,

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<sup>3</sup> The author refers to an increasing number of lay people who have picked up a little psychiatric jargon—teachers are particularly guilty—and throw it back at parents without knowing what it means themselves.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

but damnably pernicious. It leads to an exaggeratedly introspective attitude toward life and invariably does nothing more than provide artificially-produced excuses for illness, failure, and self-pity.

The material most available for study, as previously stated, has represented a highly selected group of either chronic offenders, or those whose economic situation and family background made only the more drastic methods of disposition possible. One may question the wisdom of this approach. If a business man were contemplating entering into a new industrial venture and were seeking information as to how it might be conducted most efficiently, in a way most likely to produce the best quality of goods at a minimum cost so as to pay fair wages, and at the same time make a satisfactory return in profit, he would not be likely to make any prolonged study of similar industries that had failed and closed up shop, or gone out of business into bankruptcy. He would naturally turn to those concerns who had successfully accomplished what he was planning to do. It might seem reasonable, therefore, for those interested in the problem of developing normal, healthy, well-adjusted adolescents, to study with the same degree of precision such a group of non-delinquent youngsters as would compare with the groups of delinquents that have been studied.

The specialist might learn much from the parents themselves and might profitably observe the wisdom with which they have handled some of these problems, thus gaining a little clearer perspective upon the whole subject of normal behavior as contrasted with abnormal behavior. Those of us who deal only with people in trouble, people who are unhappy, inefficient, and out of harmony with

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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life, are apt to view life through dark glasses. We sometimes forget that there is still much that is worth while in human nature and that there is no need for being disheartened.

In considering motives for delinquent conduct one must constantly keep in mind that motives for conduct in children, adolescents, and adults are frequently below the level of consciousness. If it be that all conduct has a purpose and that that purpose is a striving for emotional satisfaction, it is necessary, in the treatment of undesirable conduct, *i.e.*, in an effort to reëducate the individual, to make a plan whereby the emotional strivings of the individual will not only be satisfied but satisfied in a way that is compatible with the social standards of the group in which he is living.

With this discussion as a background, the reader may find his own analysis of the following cases helpful to him in gaining an understanding both of conduct problems in general and of such problems as he must handle in particular.

### STEALING

*Neal* was a twelve-year-old boy with a rather shy and retiring nature. He was brought to the psychiatrist by his parents who were greatly concerned over the fact that he had been stealing.

Neal's father was a business man who put in long hours at his factory and had but little time for his family. He was a man who stressed his own honesty and integrity and prided himself on his business reputation for straight dealing. He had few outside interests and not many close friends and seemed unresponsive to everything except

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

business. Neal's mother was a very high-strung, nervous individual inclined to exaggerate even the most trivial things and always speaking in superlatives. She was chiefly concerned with the question of how other people's acts affected her. There was only one other child in the family—a well-mannered but colorless little girl.

The mother described Neal as always having been a "difficult child." He had been fussy and finicky about his food habits, and irregular about his sleep. He was first observed masturbating at the age of five and had apparently continued the practice intermittently ever since. He had always been an extremely poor mixer, never entering into any competitive sports with other boys. He seemed inclined to seek his companions among boys younger than himself, whom he could dominate. His chief interests were the movies and mystery stories.

Neal had always been an abnormally curious youngster. He tried to hear every conversation that was going on, and was always searching through bureau drawers and cupboards. It was extremely difficult to keep anything private when he was about.

Even during the preschool period this lad had been in the habit of taking things—pennies from his mother's pocketbook, and food from the pantry—without asking. He seemed to have the general idea that everything that was available was his for the taking. His parents had made but little of these activities, passing over them lightly and excusing them on the grounds of his age.

At the age of nine, Neal had broadened his field of activity a bit and had begun to take things belonging to his playmates. When questioned about this, he would call it "borrowing." A little later he began to "work"

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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the stores, frequently visiting a five-and-ten-cent store where things were well-displayed and could be acquired with a fair degree of ease.

One night he came home with a dollar watch which he had picked up from a showcase and then his parents began to be rather concerned. When confronted with this particular theft, he broke down, cried a great deal, confessed, and seemed very repentant. The whole situation was talked over with the psychiatrist at that time and it seemed that the boy appreciated the difficulty he was creating for the family, and the fact that he was developing undesirable habits for himself.

Certain suggestions were made to the father in regard to his relations with the boy and it was pointed out to him that his influence on the boy was very much needed at this time. Although he seemed interested, he never followed out any of these suggestions and apparently never made any effort to establish a more intimate contact with his son. Things merely drifted along and although the boy was not in actual trouble he was not gaining in his ability to meet life frankly and honestly.

Fifteen months elapsed and then the parents reported that although the boy had gone along well for over a year, there had recently been a series of thefts in their neighborhood, small sums of money, usually ranging from fifty cents to two dollars being the only thing stolen. This had been repeated many times in their immediate neighborhood and it had been intimated that Neal had been seen slyly coming out of some of these houses.

An investigation revealed the fact that the boy had had a well-developed plan of finding some excuse for going into these homes—usually the homes of friends—and seek-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

ing an opportunity of picking up any cash which might be available, having soon learned where petty cash, pocket-books, and toy savings banks were kept.

Neal had finally admitted these thefts to his mother, who, in turn, told the father. The father instituted a rather long and severe series of lectures and complete ostracism, for which the mother tried to compensate by being over-solicitous. The boy was cut off entirely from any association with the family while the father was about, having his meals in his room and seeing almost no one. The boy's reaction to this treatment was that of being confused and bewildered by the problem, while the parents were absolutely discouraged and were fully convinced that they were dealing with a criminal.

Further investigation revealed the fact that this boy used the money which he stole for the purpose of treating a small group of newly-made friends. He would take only such amounts each day as were necessary for his needs, regardless of how much was available. He spent none of it upon himself excepting what he shared, in a rather limited way, with those whom he treated. The motive behind the stealing became obvious when all the facts were learned, and when the boy's personality and problem were studied.

This shy, self-conscious, poorly-equipped boy, without interests or abilities recognized by those of his age, out of harmony with his family as he suffered by comparison with his well-mannered, obedient sister, badly trained in habits leading to responsibility, had discovered that the same technique he had used all his life and gotten away with at home could be worked on a larger scale in dealing with the public. He also found that the human con-

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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tacts with others of his age and social recognition from his peers—something we are all constantly seeking—could be purchased in this asocial way. Had his problem been adequately recognized at eight or nine years of age, and had Neal been assisted in finding more suitable means of gaining recognition in a socially approved way—through games, social contacts, friendships, intellectual achievement, or the development of some hobby—the prognosis would have been much better and the boy and family would have been much happier. Even at this late date the same plan had to be followed out. Tennis, golf, swimming, and boating, were offered to him as a means of gaining recognition from his fellows. Further efforts to get the father to take the boy on as one of his responsibilities were also made. In general, everything possible was done to help the boy get some of the emotional satisfaction he was seeking, but to get it in a way that would not bring him in conflict with society.

*Wendell* was a boy with an excellent home background, and happy, well-stabilized parents. He was ten years of age when he was first seen by the psychiatrist. At that time he already had a long record of irregularities with reference to the property rights of others, which his parents had, however, either ignored entirely or passed over lightly. It was not until he was dismissed from school for stealing, and complicated the situation by his defensive evasions and lies, that he presented a real problem to his parents. They were at a loss to know how to deal with the situation when his conduct began to involve people outside the home.

Wendell was a well-developed lad with a pleasing personality, and his troubles caused him little anxiety. In

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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going over the entire situation with him, it was found that stealing was an end in itself rather than a means to an end, and therefore the whole problem was discussed on the basis of whether such activity paid, and what forces could be exerted to help him overcome this undesirable habit. The boy only stole when he was in need of money. He rarely shared in any way the proceeds of his thefts. He made careful plans to cover up his tracks. He was fearful of criticism and tried to cover up his thefts by lying. The boy had many friends, was a fair athlete, and seemed to be generally popular. He also did well in his school work. There was no evidence of any emotional conflicts other than his reaction to the stealing itself.

It was pointed out that a conscious effort on his part would be necessary if he was to overcome this habit. The whole problem was discussed with the father and the principal of an excellent school to which Wendell was presently admitted, and every effort was made to see that this unhappy experience be of value to the boy in the future.

At the age of twelve years Wendell had an experience in the new school. The headmaster handled the situation wisely and well himself, however, by personal contact with the boy. After remaining at this school for two more years Wendell graduated. He had since then spent two more years in a college preparatory school without having any further difficulty. The boy now states that the idea of stealing no longer needs any conscious guiding or directing, and it no longer occurs to him that here is an opportunity to get away with something or that his present financial situation would be relieved by stealing.

*Arnold*, aged thirteen years, also came from a good home and had an excellent family background. He was



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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an unattractive boy, however, being twenty pounds overweight, and rather ungainly. As one might expect, he was without either ability or interest in athletics. This boy seemed unable to make friends easily but was obviously desirous of companionship.

Arnold got into difficulty by breaking into a candy shop with two other boys who were economically and socially much below his level. It appeared from this boy's history that he had always had difficulty in making friends with those on his own social level. He entertained the idea that he was disliked and not wanted—an idea which had considerable basis in fact. When he was asked to join a small group of less desirable boys in school, therefore, he accepted the opportunity willingly and soon became a participant in their "hard-boiled" activities. In a comparatively short time he acquired the strong admiration of the leader of the group and, being unable to stand the thought of being called "yellow," he followed this leader's directions and broke into the shop. The mere anticipation of the deed filled him with fear and he was under great nervous tension until he had confessed to his father what he had done.

This boy's stealing was in no way a habitual reaction, nor did it represent any desire on his part for this type of sport. In fact, the whole thing to him was a terrifying experience and was simply a part of the gang activities into which he had suddenly fallen. There appeared to be no reason to believe, therefore, that stealing as such would be a real factor in his life, as it involved certain courage and initiative and daring which he did not have. In the course of getting at the nature of this problem, however, a certain lack of development in the boy was

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

revealed. An effort was therefore made to help overcome some of his undesirable personality traits and develop in ways that would bring more satisfaction to him, at the same time making him a more likable individual.

This situation illustrates another reason for stealing. A boy unable to compete in his own social group drops down to a lower level where such activities are accepted as part of the everyday routine in life.

*Sarah* was a young high school girl whose secret ambition was to possess and wear a lot of jewelry, such as was being worn by some of her classmates. Her mother had denied all her requests and pleas for these ornaments because she felt that they indicated a sophistication beyond Sarah's years.

One day while shopping with several girls from school, Sarah impulsively took a handful of trinkets from a store counter and quickly slipped them into her shopping bag.

As the group of girls with whom she had entered the store was immediately suspected of having committed the theft, the guilt was soon placed upon Sarah. She admitted the theft at once and was much relieved by the confession, for she had been worried, harassed, and repentant from the moment she took the things. She was humiliated and fearful lest the other students hear of her offense, and she had the reactions of one who had committed an act which was quite incompatible with her own ideals and fundamental moral attitude toward life.

The situation was handled with a great deal of wisdom by the shopkeeper of whom the things had been stolen, by the school which the girl was attending, and by the parents, and there is no reason to doubt that this episode of stealing was an incident in the life of the child out

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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of which she could be expected to gather certain stability for the future.

Sarah may be looked upon as an accidental offender whose stealing was in response to a not yet controlled desire for a specific object.<sup>1</sup> The causes of such conduct are not likely to be found in any deep-seated, or obscure conflict in the life of the individual and experience has proved that such cases need not give rise to any great anxiety. Yet, obviously, they should not be dismissed without consideration.

In the story of *Lynn*, stealing occurs as the climax of a shiftless, irresponsible, ne'er-do-well career. This boy's father suffered from a chronic illness which necessitated his being away from home for a number of years during which time he and his younger sister received such supervision as could be given by the mother.

Lynn was a well-built, nice-looking lad, in good physical condition. He was said to be kindly, good-natured, and a good mixer; also he was unselfish, but, like most of these individuals, with other people's money. His mother had always looked upon him as being rather nervous and high-strung, belonging to the unstable group. His first year out of high school he spent in one of the smaller men's colleges, but it was quite obvious that he was unable to hold his own with his classmates, and before the end of the year he left on the grounds of poor health, so-called "nervousness."

Following this experience, he had several jobs, lasting from one week to three months, but his irresponsibility made it impossible for him to continue. Lynn obtained a job in the office of a broker, a friend of the family. Complaints were soon made, however, that he was never

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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on the job, that he was irresponsible, and that it was impossible to keep track of him. It was while he was on this job that he was sent as a messenger to convey \$250 from one business office to another, and it was on this trip that he claimed he lost the money, but, instead of returning to the office and reporting the loss, he disappeared for two days and it was left to a friend of the family to fix the whole matter up at the broker's office.

This boy depended upon his personality to put himself across. He was not so much steeped in the habit of stealing as in the habit of seeking some short-cut to responsibility.

The cure in this case is not at all concerned with stealing, but in helping this boy get a more mature attitude toward his responsibility to himself, family and society. It was a question of finding for this lad an opportunity of putting himself across in a way that he can get some real satisfaction out of honest effort and postponing the desires of the moment for the things that are more worth while in the future. When a boy reaches nineteen with few of the fundamental personality traits which are characteristic of approaching maturity the task is not easy, nor can one hope to achieve the desired success in days or weeks. It is a question of months—often years.

*Bill* was a twelve-year-old boy with an unusually pleasing personality and a rather superior intellectual equipment, both of which aided him in maintaining a position of leadership among the group.

He was failing his school work, but this failure he easily explained by blaming the teachers for not giving him a square deal, and the other children for distracting him when he wanted to study.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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The problem that caused the parents concern was, again, one of stealing; but even more important than the stealing, was a habit which he had been developing for some years of being deceitful, pretending even in his feelings to be something that he really was not. He was careless and indifferent and at times cruel, and yet he talked much about being kind to animals. With money he stole, he bought toys upon which he would print the names of other children in order that they might be blamed, rather than himself. He would also secrete money in such places that if it should be discovered the blame would fall upon his younger sister. On the rare occasions when he was caught in these thefts, which sometimes amounted to several dollars and caused his parents considerable financial embarrassment, he would cheat them out of what was left of the money by evasive explanations of having spent it or otherwise disposed of it. He would make promises about working in order to earn sufficient money to pay them, but his promises were apparently made without any intention of carrying out his part of the agreement. For a short period he found that it was possible to get credit at the neighboring stores, and there again he got the family involved in considerable expense by running up bills.

On the playground he was a poor loser and was often found to be taking unfair advantage in order that he might win. His whole attitude toward life was one of putting it over the other fellow—whether the “other fellow” were parent, teacher, or playmate—by methods of evasion which were not easily detected and for which others were unfortunately blamed.

The significant factor in this boy's family history was

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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that neither his mother nor his father met his or her own problems with any degree of frankness. Their scale of living was entirely beyond what their income permitted, and they were invariably making excuses to themselves and others as to why things could not be arranged differently. The mother, under the pretense of illness, was cheating the father out of many of the marital satisfactions of life, while the father, under the pretense of business, was avoiding his responsibilities to his home and to the children. Nevertheless, they were much concerned to see the very traits in their own personality make-up manifesting themselves in this twelve-year-old boy.

This problem, obviously due to the influence of the environment, was already beginning to manifest itself in the conduct of the younger sister. The extent to which the attitude of these children could be affected for the better was dependent entirely upon the willingness of the parents to meet their own issues more frankly. The father, having a bit more insight, and being willing to face the situation more honestly, would have contributed much had the mother coöperated. Being a rather immature individual she was, however, still meeting the problems of marriage and motherhood on the same level as her twelve-year-old boy.

### CHEATING

Cheating is a problem that is commonly associated with the school and college in relation to tests and examinations, but there are other ways in which children develop this habit of taking unfair advantage of those in authority or those with whom they are competing. The love of winning, of acquiring that which has been forbidden, get-

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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ting recognition, having more freedom, and avoiding meeting life frankly in different situations, all lead to evasiveness or actual lying, which has for its purpose getting something under false pretenses or something to which the individual is not entitled, by methods of evasion.

The child who gets an allowance on condition that he performs certain chores about the house is cheating if he fails to carry out his part of the bargain. The youngster who gets praised for some task which he has not done, but which he permits others to think he has done, is a cheat. The youngster who lets his younger brother take a reprimand or punishment for something he has done and the lad who is sent on an errand and fails to return the change are likewise cheating. It is well to keep in mind that being honest in the sense of playing fair, whether it is in dealing with time, money, games, examinations, or anything else, is not an inherited trait but is something that the child acquires. In training the child it is therefore important to see that any tendencies toward evasiveness are checked at an early date and that the child does not successfully get away with the idea that he can dodge difficult situations in life by means of cheating.

These dangerous evasions which are practiced at some time by most children are all too frequently overlooked as being cute tricks or habits that will soon be outgrown. There are marked differences in children, even in children of the same family, as to their inherent tendencies. Some are friendly, affectionate, and social in their inclinations toward people; others are indifferent, retiring, and unsocial. Some acquire good habits of cleanliness, sleeping and eating, early and without any apparent effort on the part of the parent; others resent any attempt to guide

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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and direct their instinctive responses. And so it is with honesty, truthfulness, and fair play.

The recognition of the rights of others and of the extent to which these rights are infringed upon when an individual cheats seems to come easily to some children, but to others only through careful guidance and supervision; and the practice of deception, no matter how unimportant in the first instance, may easily become a habit through repetition.

One occasionally finds cheating in the adolescent as an isolated experience in his life, apparently having but little relation to his past moral standards. Such an individual invariably belongs to the group who, finding competition keen, or some subject particularly difficult, utilize some method of evasion to put themselves across. These cases are met not infrequently by the psychiatrist, and, if wisely handled, as they are in most schools and colleges, they give the student an opportunity of finding out what some of his real handicaps are.

*Angela* was a freshman in college arriving not particularly well-prepared, but with a good average intellectual equipment. She found her course in English literature particularly difficult, especially that part of the work which had to do with writing original themes. After many failures in her weekly efforts, she finally resorted to introducing into her themes several paragraphs taken from reference books, without making proper acknowledgment for the same. When confronted with these "copied" paragraphs, she denied that she had been in any way conscious of her act.

When *Angela* was seen by the psychiatrist, however, she faced the problem perfectly frankly. She was evi-



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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dently perturbed over her own evasiveness. Apparently this method of meeting a difficulty was not a fundamental personality trait, as subsequent college experience indicated that she was intellectually capable and had sufficient moral stamina to meet adequately the demands of college for the entire four years.

There is undoubtedly an inclination on the part of many students to take whatever assistance is available, justifying themselves on the grounds that they knew the answer to such and such a question but were pressed for time and couldn't think of it for the moment, or that every one else was doing the same thing. It appears that there are a sufficient number of students of this type in every class so that the student body in most colleges do not approve of the so-called honor system. They do not want to take the responsibility of reporting offenders inasmuch as "tattling" is considered almost as reprehensible by the student body (if not more so) as the cheating itself. The responsibility for fair play for all concerned is thus usually put upon the masters and instructors.

Occasionally one finds students who, although never detected in cheating, have had so much conflict over the possibility or desirability of doing so that they report themselves.

*Georgia*, a sophomore in college, was a girl with a somewhat colorless personality, and but a limited number of acquaintances and few intimate friends. She was said to be a person of high moral principles. She visited the psychiatrist of her own accord because she was having a great deal of conflict over the fact that on two or three occasions during her college course she had cheated—twice, as

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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she stated, by simply glancing at papers belonging to other students, and the third time by referring to papers which she had brought into the examination room. After returning from the spring vacation she was rather upset over having obtained marks which she felt she had not deserved. She discussed the matter with two students, one of whom told her that she was exaggerating a rather trivial situation tremendously and the other that she should discuss the matter with the dean.

A study of this girl's reactions, and of her conduct history left little doubt but that her personality was one in which honesty was a dominant trait and that whenever she was confronted with situations in which she had to make decisions as to right and wrong, she invariably chose to be honest. Whether she had actually cheated or whether she had merely been playing around with the idea of cheating was not definitely determined. Inasmuch as she had entertained other ideas that she might carry out serious delinquencies which were quite incompatible with her own personality make-up, there was some reason to believe that her anxiety about cheating fell in that same group. There was a suggestion, too, that there was something allied to "super-honesty" in making the confession.

Several conferences with this student were helpful in giving her a better outlook on life and, in spite of the fact that her psychological rating was not in the high group, she graduated *cum laude*.

*Gilbert* was a boy fourteen years of age who had developed a habit of evading the real issues of life through having most of his difficulties met for him by over-solicitous parents. He was a fairly good athlete, and particu-

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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larly interested in tennis, but this interest carried with it an intense desire to win. On several occasions he had been known to stop in the middle of a match that was going against him, complaining that he could not go on as his eyes were bothering him.

Careful examination by a specialist revealed no possible cause for the trouble as described. It was obvious that Gilbert's poor eyesight was just a way out of a difficult situation.

It is difficult to evaluate to what extent this whole process was conscious to the boy, but when one thinks of cheating, one must keep in mind that if we cannot play square with ourselves, we cannot possibly play square with others, so that many of the unconscious mechanisms used in what seems to be unbearable situations are examples of double cheating. There is no type of cheating that is ultimately more harmful than that of self-deception.

### RUNNING AWAY

Running away and truancy are frequently so far removed from delinquency that one hesitates to discuss them in this chapter, yet the truant, regardless of the urges that prompt his initial wanderings, so frequently gets mixed up with the delinquent or becomes associated with delinquency that his conduct must be looked upon as a step in that direction.

Truancy does not appear to be very serious to those who have had the God-given privilege of being reared in the small village. Their conception of truancy may well be that of an opportunity to cut a fish pole, borrow

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

a boat, and steal away for an afternoon to some stream or lake with a congenial companion, knowing well that the fourth-grade teacher is busily engaged preparing a note for home consumption and that Bill, the truant officer, is looking over the usual haunts about the wharves trying to pick up a couple of ten-year-olds and an extra dollar. At the worst, such truancy would end with a humiliating march into the crowded schoolroom where the other children would giggle and the school teacher would put on her most forbidding look. After she had praised the truant officer for timely and efficient service, and given him an order on the Town Treasurer, she might get busy and administer justice without mercy to the two young delinquents who were well on the road to the place where bad boys go.

There is a wealth of romance and happy memories in that type of truancy which added a bit of color to what would otherwise have been a drab and uninteresting school experience. This is not, however, the truancy which fills our juvenile courts, leads to undesirable companionship and serious types of delinquency, and has its driving force in mental conflicts from which the child is fleeing blindly to some haven or retreat where life may be more tolerable even for the moment though he may be well aware of the price he must pay for this temporary relief.

Dr. Miriam Van Waters offers a number of possible motives for truancy. "Truancy may be a misplaced virtue. It may occur in obedience to a selfish, distrustful, lazy or avaricious parent. It may be a biological protest against bad air, physical defects, or healthy criticism of a course of study hopelessly dull, heavy, mechanical and uninteresting. Frequently it is an attempt to evade re-

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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sponsibility, to escape meeting an issue; again it is a mode of self-expression, or of taking revenge. The manner in which the first serious truancy is handled may decide the fate of the child as to whether or not it will enter upon a career of delinquency.”<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Van Waters cites a number of very interesting cases illustrating these various motives and typical of truants coming before the Juvenile Court.

It becomes quite obvious that these problems all spring from conflict between the individual and his environment and that no two individuals meet their problem in exactly the same way. One child who is unhappy at home, inadequate at school, and unpopular with the group, may find emotional outlet by battling with life and fighting every antagonist to the bitter end, without giving or asking odds from any one. Another succumbs and retreats from the scene of battle, frankly admitting failure. The next may find a way out through illness or incapacity, which invariably meets with sympathy and apparent understanding on the part of the parents. Still others, through running away, leave one difficult situation, hoping that just around the corner peace awaits them. These are all different ways of meeting difficult situations in life. There is something contributed by the inherent make-up of the individual which helps to determine whether he will blame the world for his own failures, or blame himself for the failure of others.

It matters not whether the problem be one of stealing, cheating, lying, truancy, or an illness which serves as a means of escape—it can be summed up by saying that training, education and experience have failed to equip

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<sup>4</sup> Miriam Van Waters, *Youth in Conflict*, p. 90.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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these individuals to meet life adequately and turn them out as well-adjusted social human beings. As Dr. A. Warren Stearns points out in his most interesting and enlightening book, *The Personality of the Criminal*, "It will be noted that both the sick and the poor are traditionally objects of sympathy and pity. Their difficulties arouse our tenderest feelings. One who aids or assists in assuaging the sufferings of the sick or poor but follows natural inclinations. The situation is quite different with the bad. Those persons are rebels; they irritate and offend us. Our natural inclination is to punish or destroy them. This is probably why the improvement in the care of the bad has not kept pace with that of the sick and the poor; but persons versed in the social sciences are beginning to scrutinize the bad."<sup>5</sup>

It may be the training or it may be the strength or weakness of certain instinctive forces, but it is obvious that something has gone wrong when the individual is in constant conflict with either society or himself.

In the following cases the conflict with society is not as important as the individual's conflicts with himself. Such conflicts are none the less painful and incapacitating.

*Coleman* was a sixteen-year-old boy with a good average intellectual equipment. Excepting for a chronic asthmatic condition which restricted his athletic activities, he had always enjoyed good health until he was about eight years of age. He was the son of a highly skilled mining engineer who was a friendly, kindly individual, but who, for some reason, failed to understand this boy and offered him but little companionship.

Coleman's mother was an emotionally unstable woman

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<sup>5</sup> A. Warren Stearns, *The Personality of the Criminal*, p. 22.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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and had been steeped in deep sorrow for five years on account of the loss of the patient's younger brother. (She is another example of a mother who created much resentment in the lives of the living by building her own life around the dead.)

Coleman's school work had been average, or a bit better, up to the time he was fourteen, when he was kept out of school on account of a severe infection. Upon his return, he had apparently lost not only much ground, but all of his interest in school work. He was resentful about being left behind his classmates, and this attitude reflected itself in his conduct in the home. He became extremely critical of his father, demanding in his attitude towards his mother, resentful towards all criticism and rebellious towards authority; he also cried a great deal. In this unfortunate frame of mind, he lost many of his friends, became extremely unhappy, and was given to short periods of depression.

It was during such periods of depression that he first began to disappear from home. After not letting his parents know where he was for several days at a time, he would telegraph for money. These episodes of running away, with the accompanying dread lest the next telegram should announce some catastrophe, were causing his parents so much worry and anxiety that they were both on the verge of a breakdown.

Fortunately this boy had some ability in drawing that had been recognized by a friend of the family who was in a position to place him with a competent instructor away from home. The boy was advised to leave school and build his life around a real interest which solved his problem in the most satisfactory way.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

There are many examples of isolated episodes of truancy which occur for reasons so numerous and varied that one can only mention a few in passing.

*Ted* was a fifteen-year-old boy who had been brought up in a good home, with a strong, healthy attachment to his father. He also had many outside interests and a great deal of initiative, and, although he was a leader among the boys of his age, he was quite capable of entertaining himself.

During the summer of his fourteenth year, he had, however, become quite a problem to the family. He had roamed about a great deal on his own with complete irresponsibility about making his appearance promptly for meals or getting in at the proper time at night. In the hope of helping him to see the reasonableness of an orderly existence, his family planned to send the boy to camp for the summer. Ted rebelled against this plan. His father however, thinking that the boy would enjoy the experience after he once got settled in the camp, and convinced that the plan was best for the boy, took him up to the camp under the pretense of going to visit a friend. Ted got along very well and seemed to be enjoying himself for the afternoon, and presently the father slipped away without saying "good-by" or making it known to the boy that he was to stay. This method of leave-taking was quite contrary to the ordinary frank manner in which the father dealt with his son and it greatly upset Ted. He took the first opportunity, which happened to be the following day, of running away. The father was considerably surprised and very much disappointed over this end to his plans and brought the boy to the psychiatrist, admitting that he was baffled by the problem.



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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In this situation we find the father resorting to a plan of deception not unlike that practiced by the boy, which he was earnestly endeavoring to overcome. It is not infrequent to find parents either habitually or in desperation doing this very thing—meeting anger with anger, and deception and fear with more deception. This may work out for the moment, but such a course cannot ultimately be successful. Frankness and honesty may make for temporary rebellion, but it never leads to the loss of confidence and respect which is so essential for a happy, efficient working relationship between the adolescent and the adult.

Every year, innumerable children “run away” for no outstanding reason. They are pushed on by the spirit of wanderlust that urges the more venturesome to seek new scenes, new faces, new experiences, and real adventure. Their running away is in no way an indication that their homes are bad or their parents unjust, or that they themselves are suffering from any particular conflict in life; it is simply an indication that they belong to that group of human beings who are more concerned with having new experiences than they are with enjoying a quiet security; that, at least, seems to be their outlook on life at the moment when they start out on their pilgrimages. Most of these children return within a comparatively short time, wiser and more mature for their journey. One must keep in mind that truants are not always running away from unpleasant situations, but are often lured from the security and satisfactions of their home to seek what is just beyond in the great unknown. It is well that this urge for adventure is part and parcel of the personality

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

make-up of many sturdy souls. Without it we would never have had Columbus, Amundsen, MacMillan, or Byrd, and we would be without all that they have contributed to our knowledge of what were, and in many instances still are, regions unexplored excepting by these venturesome spirits and their followers.

### “UNMANAGEABLENESS”

There are a group of cases which occur during the latter part of adolescence which present a rather involved, yet fairly well-defined, symptom complex. The individual case might be utilized as an example of irresponsibility, stealing, truancy, disobedience, and numerous other evidences of asocial activity. The outstanding symptoms, however, are irresponsibility, resentment toward all authority, cruelty, pugnacity which manifests itself by actual physical assault, usually on one or both parents, and general unmanageableness. The group as a whole are well-endowed intellectually and it is often difficult to explain their conduct in terms of a poor environment. The wide swings in their emotions and sudden changes in their conduct makes them most difficult individuals to deal with successfully. The courts sometimes term them “incorrigible,” implying that the ordinary methods of correction are of no avail in handling them. The psychiatric clinics call them “psychopathic personalities,” “constitutional inferiors,” and various other names which add but little to our understanding of the forces which tend to produce conduct so bizarre, purposeless and resistant to treatment.

The study of individual cases is, of course, helpful and

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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reveals some common factors which account for this type of conduct. All these adolescents are unhappy even to the extent of having definite depressions. There is usually a conflict between their ambitions and achievements. They are in a hurry to grow up and appear to be running away from the past and present into the future, which is always going to solve their problems for them. They are the victims of a state of mind in which they recognize their own shortcomings. They compare themselves with others to their own disadvantage; their self-regard is at low ebb; they project their own poor opinion of themselves on others, so that they begin to think that every one else has the same opinion of them as they have of themselves, and then resenting this, they utilize every method they can to "get even" with an unjust world. They soon find that the people who are most easily hurt, most tolerant, and safest to defy, humiliate and persecute, are their own parents. They soon recognize that as every child is part of the whole family group, parents can't express displeasure with the individual child without affecting the whole family, and they are not slow to take advantage of this.

Yet it is a situation where the door must be unlocked and not battered down. Our inclination is to subdue these individuals by force. They annoy and irritate us, arousing in us feelings of antagonism and none of the finer emotions. We are tolerant of the sex offender, we pity the thief, and are sympathetic toward the truant, but for the individual who is cruel and a bully we have nothing but ill will and often hatred.

Obviously this is a state of affairs to be avoided. It should be prevented, if possible, by knowing the child well

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

enough to sense the early evidences of dissatisfaction, which are likely to make their first appearance as complaints of petty grievances—complaints of not getting a square deal from the teacher, not being liked by the children, being slighted at parties, and being discriminated against by partial parents. The individual is convinced that he is dumb, and he hates this or that person. It may be the first indication of his sense of being thwarted by life is disobedience, leading to defiance, and later to open rebellion. Here perhaps the parents are likely to make the mistake which proves very costly later: They may meet this unhappy, sullen, defiant child with temper, force and rigid discipline, and invariably they do this at a time when the child is in a state of mind to profit little by either temper or talk. He is so confused, upset, and dissatisfied with life that another lecture or whipping does nothing more than substantiate his idea that the world is against him. What the child needs just at that moment is a little time to find himself, some one who will try to help him fathom out what it is all about, and how best he can plan his life so that he will get more out of it. It is a time when parents should be more concerned about the happiness of the child than they are about one hundred per cent obedience or efficiency. Most children who get into real difficulty are fundamentally dissatisfied and unhappy.

When the problem is already developed and must be met as such, assistance must come from two sources. Everything possible must be done to help the individual overcome his feeling of inferiority; (1) by evaluating his assets—intellectual equipment, physical health, his family, his good personality traits; (2) by placing him in a situation where he will have an opportunity to estab-

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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lish his independence and self-confidence. This usually means removing him from the source of his present conflicts in the home and establishing him, temporarily at least, in an environment uncontaminated by his past dissatisfactions. Inasmuch as most of these serious problems occur late in adolescence, the individuals are sufficiently mature to leave home either to enter boarding school or college, or to get a job, or to take a prolonged vacation, or whatever else the economic condition of the family permits. The emotional dependence upon the family is frequently a very important aspect of the problems and the adolescents need to be pushed away toward assuming responsibility with courage and confidence, not allowing themselves to be held back by fear and misgivings. The adolescents belonging to this particular group, who are unhappy and resentful toward life, do worst with those they love best.

*Girard* was a well-developed boy, seventeen years of age, with an average intellectual endowment, getting on well in school. He created considerable consternation in the minds of his family when he failed to return home one night until three o'clock. For a year or more there had been other irregularities with reference to Girard's social life, but he had always met his father's reprimands concerning these rather passively, occasionally showing some sullenness. On this particular morning, however, when he was met by his father, who had been impatiently waiting for him, Girard became insolent and defiant and met his father in open battle. After completely subduing him physically, he talked to him in a way which left no doubt in the mind of the father that he was hated and had been hated for a long time by his son, and that his

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

control over him through physical force and discipline was over.

This father was a professor, nervous and high-strung, particularly when under the strain of working on his favorite research. Girard's mother had died when the boy was ten, and he had been mothered by his paternal grandmother ever since. This rather elderly lady was one of those quite passive individuals who always have their emotions well under control. She acted as the buffer between father and son. The constant worry and anxiety of the last seven years had definitely left its mark upon her and she looked at least ten years older than she actually was.

This lad had a younger sister twelve years of age, the only other child in the family. She was a happy, cheerful, youngster who, unfortunately, had had a long series of illnesses and had, therefore, required a great deal of care from the grandmother and had received more than her share of attention from the father. Girard took great delight in teasing her and, in a general way, making his younger sister's life as miserable as his ingenuity would permit. It was said by his grandmother that he had a passion for asserting his authority. He never lost an opportunity to let her know that she could not boss him, it mattered not whether it was a question of combing his hair, brushing his teeth, being more kindly to his younger sister, or coming in before midnight.

Toward members of the family other than his father, Girard would occasionally show a kindly, friendly, and affectionate attitude, and for days at a time would go out of his way to make himself helpful. Then suddenly, unexpectedly, and for no apparent reason, his mood would

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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change to one of bullying, and his cruel, humiliating tactics would begin all over.

Girard had been sent away to school at the age of fourteen. During the three years following this first experience, he had been to several boarding schools besides attending the local high school for short periods in between. He had made himself so disagreeable at the schools that he was either expelled or things were made so unhappy for him that he would leave without notice.

This boy had a mature, sophisticated attitude toward life and was trying desperately hard to be grown-up. He prided himself on being able to make a place for himself with the older boys who were indulging themselves with a bit of smoking and drinking and playing about in a harmless but perhaps indiscreet way with girls.

Interestingly enough, his father still looked upon him as a mere child and, if it had been possible, would have held him down to the activities of a ten- or twelve-year-old boy. It was therefore not surprising that there was a wide gulf between the boy and his father, and a considerable difference of opinion as to just what his social activities should be. The father had but one idea, and that was to squelch the rebellion at once, regardless of the force that was necessary, and he utilized these tactics up to the moment when he was actually defeated in open combat.

The subsequent history of the case is too long for a detailed description, but it bears witness to the fact that neither the force of the father nor the presumed wisdom of the psychiatrist had much effect on this boy's activity for a period of three years. It is, however, only fair to say that neither method of handling the problem was

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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fairly worked out as the two plans of treatment were so diametrically opposed that they neutralized one another. Time itself was given an opportunity to demonstrate the fact that most of these emotional turmoils of youth tend, as has been said before, to be self-eliminating.

*Viola*, aged eighteen, was a well-developed and most attractive girl with superior intellectual equipment. She was keenly ambitious. Her parents were happy and well-adjusted to each other but both of them were overindulgent to their only child. *Viola* had been brought up without discipline, and had always been permitted to make her own choices whether in matters of meals, clothes, or amusements. She took great delight in being badly mannered and rarely helped out in the house.

This girl got along without any particular difficulty so long as she was living at home under the protection of her parents. When she left home to go to college, however, she found that her home training had been quite inadequate to allow her to compete socially with her classmates. Having been used to having the center of the stage, she resented finding herself often completely overlooked, and although she was frequently ashamed and humiliated by her bad manners, she would attempt to pass this humiliation off by assuming indifference. She was so extremely unhappy at the end of her first semester that she remained at home and there began the conduct which caused her parents real concern. She blamed them both for the fact that she was untrained to live in the college environment. She talked constantly of her humiliation in not knowing how to act at the table and being ignorant of the ordinary, everyday courtesies which the other girls showed to each other and the members of



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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the faculty. She referred to her home, which was most attractive, as a place for pigs. She resented the fact that her father, who was a business man with adequate income, could not live as some of her more affluent friends lived.

Viola showed her resentment very largely in words rather than by any actual delinquency.

Like the boy just discussed, she got a great deal of satisfaction out of humiliating her parents in front of visitors and making cruel remarks about the father in the presence of guests. Underneath all her rebelliousness Viola was a shy, diffident, retiring girl who never went out with boys and never participated in any of the smoking or drinking enjoyed by some of her companions. She eventually made a satisfactory adjustment, and was liked by all who knew her.

*Herbert* was a boy seventeen years of age, well-developed physically and with average intellectual endowment. He was a pleasing person to meet in a social way.

His parents were divorced but continued to play one against the other for the boy's attention and affection. Up to the time he was thirteen, Herbert was said to have been "a good sort of boy." He was kindly, friendly, obedient, and did good work in school. He seemed to have no outstanding habits of an undesirable nature or personality traits that would seem to indicate a handicap later on. It was after his parents were divorced that his conduct problem began. He became irresponsible in his school work, frequently ran away from home, and firmly resented any questioning on the part of his mother. This undependable and irresponsible attitude developed so rapidly that, at the end of a year and a half, he was sent

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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away to school in the hope of supplying him with the supervision and discipline which had been withdrawn when his father had left home.

At school Herbert improved in his scholastic work but was said to be a bad influence on the other boys, indulging in frequent masturbation and initiating other youngsters into undesirable sex activities. During his vacation he started staying out very late at night, and, according to his mother, going with "cheap girls and immoral boys." He also began taking articles of considerable value from his mother, usually jewelry. He finished the year at boarding school, but his mother was requested not to send him back.

He refused to work during the summer, and during his three months of idleness he caused his mother a great deal of concern. He would demand money of her and, when refused, would fly into violent rages, using profane and obscene language. He invariably threatened her, on several occasions either choking or slapping her. He would make an effort to humiliate her by appearing in the presence of callers unclothed except for a bath robe which permitted of exposure; yet, at times, and over a period of weeks he would be "as gentle and helpful and affectionate as one could ask any boy to be towards his mother."

As time went on Herbert became less responsible and more resentful toward all authority, both at home and outside, making it impossible for him either to remain at school or to hold a job. He would devise mean, cruel, and underhanded ways of humiliating his mother, and his abusive treatment of her became so frequent that arrangements had to be made for him to live away from home.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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Herbert claimed that he was most desirous of being an aviator. He talked a good deal about the opportunities for a young man in that field and had rather superficial plans as to what he would do after his training, but did nothing toward actually preparing himself to do the job.

*Willard* was a lad fifteen years of age whose grievance toward life was directed toward the school and his teachers rather than toward his mother and father, of whom he was very fond, and toward whom he was respectful and obedient and showed the most kindly consideration.

Willard resented being away from home—a circumstance which was brought about by the fact that his father's business and social interests prevented the establishment of anything more than temporary quarters in a hotel, making it feasible to keep the children in boarding schools. In spite of the fact that the lad had a good intellectual equipment and had never been mixed up in any delinquencies, he had been in five different schools during his scholastic career of nine years.

Willard kept a fairly detailed record of his feelings about the schools and teachers in general and the school he happened to be in at the moment in particular, and these impressions were recorded in most profane and obscene language and invariably left about so that they would be found by the master of the school. This usually resulted in his being expelled. He had learned from experience that this particular technique served his purpose to better advantage than open rebellion as he was invariably sent to live with his father, perhaps having a short period at a public school, until arrangements could be made to ship him away to the next boarding school.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

This boy's problem was solved in the simple, logical way of having the family consider the boy's need of a home and build their life a little more closely around their son.

### NEUROSES

To the layman a neurosis has become an all-inclusive term which covers a large group of symptoms and various combinations of symptoms which cannot be accounted for by any primary disturbance of the physiology of the body. The medically trained person would point out that the mental and physical aspect of the individual's life do not operate independently of each other and that any disturbance which manifests itself on a physiological level will soon be followed by evidences of symptoms on the psychological level, the same interrelationship between the psychic and physical being demonstrated when the psychological level is first affected. Yet for purposes of understanding some particular aspect of an individual's behavior it is necessary to think in terms of whether it is primarily a physiological or a psychological response, at the same time appreciating that eventually there will be evidence that both levels are involved and that it is the total reaction of the individual with which we are concerned.

In order to be sure that one is dealing with a neurosis it is necessary not only to exclude all possible physical causes of the condition under consideration, but also to determine the life situation to which the individual is reacting in this way and the purpose which the neurosis might be serving.

The symptoms are numerous and varied and oftentimes

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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of such a bizarre nature that they are most perplexing to the parent or even the physician not familiar with this type of medical problem.

The neurotic individual is usually self-centered and invariably unduly concerned about himself. The physical manifestations are usually directed toward some organ or system of organs such as in nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, palpitation, cardiac pain, or sensations of the heart being squeezed, dizziness, fainting spells, tingling, numbness, loss of sensation, retention of urine or frequency of micturition, or even paralysis, blindness, deafness, and loss of speech. These are only a few of the physical symptoms; the mental symptoms are far more complex. Strange and unreasonable fears, called phobias—such as fear of dirt, closed spaces, riding in subways, going in an elevator, or being in crowds—dominate the individual's conduct, often confining the victim to his home, occasionally even to his room, and leading him to all manner of erratic and, for many people, unexplainable behavior. Individuals afflicted with such handicaps represent the more severe, or at least the more dramatic types, of those cases in which the patient's body may be physically sound and his intellect unimpaired but his whole life nevertheless affected by poor mental health.

The great majority of these neurotic individuals, however, may escape notice except from those who live in intimate contact with them. They are more likely to complain of uncomfortable physical sensations, insomnia, depression, loss of appetite, lack of interest in anything excepting their own symptoms which are invariably purely subjective and cannot be demonstrated or measured by any of the clinical or laboratory examinations or cured

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

by any therapy applied on the physiological level. These complex reactions must be interpreted in terms of the individual's past experiences. It is essential that a careful study be made of the personality of the individual so affected and that a careful investigation be made of the varied life situations which he has had to meet and particularly the environment and all its complexities which he was making an attempt to meet when he reached the point where the neurosis was essential for his own protection.

Invariably one finds an accumulation of causes, some of them operating at the moment and others latent, forgotten or unrecognized as precipitating factors to the actual break which prevented the adolescent from carrying on as a normal individual.

All too frequently the precipitating factor of the neurosis is only the last straw and the more important determining causes are to be found buried in the history of the individual's past. The whole problem is all too complicated for parents to deal with unassisted. These cases need the care and supervision of those best trained to cope with them. It is, however, of paramount importance for parents to appreciate that during adolescence many young people become the victims of these emotional disorders which if recognized early can be successfully treated, but if permitted to pass by unnoticed, or if recognized but unwisely treated, may develop into permanent incapacities.

Those parents who really know their children and are intimately acquainted with the varied traits that constitute their personality make-up, will not be slow to recognize alterations in their moods, interests, and conduct.

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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They will be aware of the sensitive spots in the lives of their children and take into account the varying personality needs of the boys and girls whose future they are shaping.

The following cases are interesting examples of how escapes are sometimes made from difficult situations by short-circuiting certain functions. Such cases are not seen as commonly as some of the other groups but they illustrate very well the importance of keeping in mind the fact that almost any symptom can have its basis in mental conflict.

*Olga* was a sixteen-year-old high school girl who had always been looked upon as an exceptionally brilliant student. During her freshman year in high school, she maintained a high standing in her class, but by the end of the year she had fallen from the prestige of leadership in spite of great effort and much worry and anxiety on her part. Although she went to school daily, she no longer found it a pleasure, and without the leadership which she had always enjoyed, she found reciting an unpleasant task.

In the beginning of her sophomore year, she was excused from recitations because of a moderately severe attack of laryngitis which persisted so long that the teacher informed her one day that beginning the following week she must recite. Over the week-end Olga lost her voice to the extent that she could only speak in a very low whisper, and as pressure was exerted upon her to make the effort to talk, she lost her voice entirely. This condition lasted for over a year in spite of much treatment from various throat specialists.

The treatment involved in restoring the voice was

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

purely one of suggestion and of no particular importance in this connection. The subsequent therapy, however, which had to do with explaining the motive and the purpose of her incapacity to her was most important.

Medically this case represents a conversion hysteria in which mental conflicts became converted into physical symptoms. It is an unconscious defense reaction towards a difficult situation and may affect any organ or set of organs.

*Effie* was a thirteen-year-old ward of the state, who was being boarded out in a private home. Her father was dead and her mother irresponsible, and *Effie* had suffered much in her training and development by being moved about frequently. Although she was happy and good-natured, she was careless and indifferent toward her obligations in the foster homes in which she had been placed. This had led to incessant nagging from practically every one with whom she had come in contact. Besides these scoldings she had to put up with visits from her mother who had a pitiful story to tell her about the hardships which she had to undergo.

It was therefore not difficult to understand why every once in a while the girl became absolutely deaf for a period lasting from one to three weeks. This deafness served the useful purpose of cutting her off from the unwelcome criticism and the painful tales which she would otherwise have had to hear.

*Rose* represents this latter group as well as any case that might be considered in this connection.

*Rose* was a happy, cheerful, good-natured seventeen-year-old girl who had always enjoyed good health. She found going away from home to school dull and uninter-



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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esting, and missed her home and her friends. Being without any particular objective in life, she did not think the experience worth while. After a few days she got in touch with her family and pleaded to be allowed to come home, but this was forbidden, and within a week she became a patient in the infirmary—"a very sick girl" with many symptoms, but no evidence of real illness. She was allowed to leave school and spent a short vacation with friends, which she enjoyed immensely, dancing, going to the theater, attending parties, and staying up late nights. She returned to school with many misgivings as to her ability to carry on. In a few days she began again to complain of being unable to sleep, being nervous and having difficulty in concentrating. Her complaints received sympathetic attention, and she was sent home.

Rose was herself well aware of the ruse by which she had succeeded in getting her family to remove her from an uninteresting and somewhat lonesome situation, and she had not deceived herself as to her motive; this, so far as her mental health was concerned, was fortunate, but the effect on her school progress was not, perhaps, all that could have been desired.

*Dick's* chief and fundamental trouble was due to the fact that he had been the center of attention in a large family circle for a period of nearly fifteen years. Three sets of grandparents, a mother and a father, and two older sisters made up an appreciative audience which was difficult to resist. In spite of this handicap, however, he had done better than might naturally have been expected. Although somewhat critical of others, he was a likable chap and made friends easily. He was especially considerate of those who were socially inferior and in no

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

way competing with him, and was rather inclined to deprecate the value of those who were his equals or superiors. He rode well, played a good game of tennis and golf and always considered himself particularly efficient at baseball.

During his first year at boarding school, he got on with indifferent success. He had a few close friends, but many of those with whom he made contact looked upon him as being stuck-up. His scholastic work was passable but inferior to what one had reason to expect of a boy of his intellectual equipment. It was later gathered from talking with his parents that he was simply hanging on till the baseball season opened, so that he could demonstrate to the school that he was a regular fellow and that he had been misunderstood and underrated. This was the general theme of his conversation with the various members of his family when he was at home for Easter.

When the baseball season actually opened, he started out enthusiastically to demonstrate his superior ability in this particular field, but he found competition keener than he had expected. He had made no allowance for the fact that the older boys would be given preference over the new ones and he soon began to talk about not getting a square deal. This attitude of mind did not improve his achievement on the baseball field, and it was not long before he was being called down by the coach and razzed by the other boys for not doing his best.

While he was in this state of mind he was accidentally hit in the head by a pitched ball during a practice game. It appeared to be nothing more than a glancing blow at the time. He was not unconscious, but it was thought wise to send him to the infirmary, where he was

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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carefully examined immediately by the school physician and that same night by a neurologist as he had begun to complain of loss of vision. The neurological and X-ray examinations revealed nothing to account for his symptoms.

Two or three days later he was visited by a psychiatrist, who, in the meantime, had acquired from the family, the principal of the school, and two of his masters, a fairly complete history of the boy and his general reactions to life. Being assured by a previous medical examination that the loss of vision was not due to injury or disease he was able to determine that this boy's handicap was serving a very definite purpose in his life—that is, getting him much attention and sympathy on the one hand, and, on the other hand, keeping him out of what had unconsciously developed in his mind as being an intolerable situation—namely, meeting competition on the baseball field.

(The similarity between this method of evasion, and evasion through cheating, is apparent even though this occurs on an unconscious level.)

Treatment was started on the basis that the loss of vision was nothing more than a physiological response to a psychological situation, and the necessary steps from a psychiatric point of view were taken to help the boy find a way out of this new situation. In a few days his sight was as good as ever. By the end of the spring term, the boy had acquired an outlook upon life, which undoubtedly will prove useful in future years. In brief, he had suddenly grown up emotionally and obtained a mature point of view in regard to his obligations and responsibilities toward the world at large.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

### ALCOHOLISM

As was pointed out earlier, some individuals seek only temporary means of escape from their conflicts or the unpleasantness of their immediate situation. Such individuals may find in drink an adequate surcease from sorrow, or a satisfactory support to bolster up their feeble courage and help them overcome or forget the obstacle making for conflict.

It is during adolescence that habits of drinking are usually established and excessive drinking is usually a symptom rather than a disease. This is true, at least, in the beginning. Most adolescents are introduced to liquor through social intercourse, and a few experiment out of curiosity, but only occasionally does one find them drinking purely from the liking for the liquor itself.

Liquor serves no useful purpose in the life of the adolescent. It is a dangerous weapon with which to play. It destroys self-control, and leads to conduct which otherwise would never occur, such as vandalism, stealing, sex indulgences including rape and perversions, innumerable automobile accidents resulting in deformity and death, and every other type of accident, crime and misfortune which naturally results when men or women are let loose without the guidance of those higher centers which serve the purpose of controlling the organism.

One must keep in mind, however, that of all those who indulge in the use of alcohol during the adolescent period, relatively few become addicted to drunkenness. Alcohol does its real damage to those who by their inherent mental instability utilize liquor as a crutch to tide them over a period when their fortitude is lacking, and to supply for

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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the moment courage, artificial though it may be, to meet some of life's many demands that appear to be just a little beyond their capacity. In other words, as Trotter puts it, "In the tragic conflict between what he has been taught to desire and what he is allowed to get, man has found in alcohol, as he has found in certain other drugs, a sinister but effective peace-maker, a means of securing, for however short a time, some way out of the prison house of reality back to the Golden Age."<sup>6</sup>

Alcoholism should not be looked upon as either a conduct disorder or a disease but rather as a symptom of some instability of the mental make-up of the individual. Like the neurosis, which relieves the individual from meeting the responsibilities of life, the purpose which it serves must be diligently sought.

The college period is the time when many of the individuals who later become confirmed alcoholics first utilize alcohol as a means of escape. Perhaps up to this time they have used other devices to avoid the stresses and strains of life, or perhaps they have lived so closely sheltered by over-solicitous parents that their lives have not been subjected to the ordinary hardships. Whatever their background has been, it is invariably the individual who is poorly prepared to meet the ordinary obligations of life, who thrives on success but literally wilts when confronted with failure, and who is emotionally twisted and torn by disappointment and sorrow, who turns to alcohol as a support upon which to lean in time of trouble. This is the lad who is in grave danger of becoming addicted to the use of alcohol. He is the type who drinks

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<sup>6</sup> W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, p. 58.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

too much at night and insists upon bracing himself the next morning on a few more drinks. All this is an attempt to forget the life situation from which he is running away and to buck up his own self-regard to a point where he can justify his own conduct.

One should be much more concerned about the personality of the individual and the circumstances under which he indulges in drink than over the drinking itself. It is the psychological situation to which the drinking is a response that needs careful investigation. The question of social drinking must be met frankly and openly by parents. It does no good to deny its existence or howl from the housetops that it was not done in the olden days. Neither can the present-day youth be impressed by the sinfulness of this type of activity. There is no better basis upon which to meet the situation than that of education and enlightenment. Whatever prohibition has done to justify the experiment—and one must grant that it has done much—it has made drinking popular for young people. The introduction of the hip flask, synthetic gin and the cocktail, have played an important part in the social activities of many young people during the past decade and that its effects have not been far more devastating to the country as a whole bears witness to the fact that after all is said and done the youth of America to-day are not lacking in physical stamina, mental stability or moral courage. The great masses of the boys and girls of this country with a newly-acquired freedom, with unbounded opportunity for liberty and license, associated with a realization of the force which they are capable of exerting in the community, have taken these newly-acquired privileges, all of them laden with the stuff that

## Delinquency and Neuroses

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just naturally leads to revolt, and have managed themselves with wisdom that should demand more respect and less criticism from adults, whose criticism is, after all, bred of fear of what is going to happen next.

One of life's earliest, most difficult and painful lessons is that we cannot indulge without discrimination the varied impulses and desires that are constantly being aroused, demanding our attention, and seeking avenues of expression, without getting into trouble with society or creating conflicts within ourselves. Long before we appreciate just why we should not pull the covers off the table, hurl the ornaments about the room, pinch, squeeze and annoy younger members of the family, run blindly out into the crowded street, take candy, food or money which does not belong to us, or do innumerable other things, we learn that such behavior brings swift and painful punishment or that in some way or other it works out to our disadvantage.

There is very little logical reasoning to aid us in refraining from this impulsive and apparently purposeless type of activity. We simply associate these acts with the unpleasant experiences which invariably follow and there are set up within us certain restraints or inhibitions toward the repetition of these acts.

As we grow in stature and advance in years and are subjected to an increasing variety of life's situations and experiences, we become aware of the fact that not only does the family have certain rules and regulations but that society itself—that larger social group with which we make contact either at school, on the playground, or elsewhere—is governed by a code of laws approved by the group, and that the customs and traditions of society are

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

not at all unlike the habits and personality traits of the individual. Society frowns upon those who do not follow with a fair degree of regularity the accepted customs of the group. As the intellectual faculties develop we begin to get a new and quite personal appreciation of the wisdom or folly of being guided by these self-made laws of man. For the most part we, as individuals, become concerned about the approval and disapproval of the social group in which we live. We recognize clearly that many of the habits and attitudes which we have been practicing by mere force of habit are working out to our advantage and it is by these very habits which we have made a part of ourselves that we have become acceptable to the group.

As we advance in wisdom, we recognize the necessity of postponing the desires of the moment in order to acquire at some future time some objective which has a clear and more permanent value than that which we have given up. We are rather inclined to approve of the existing social order in which such instinctive drives as sex, pugnacity, and acquisitiveness are not allowed to express themselves unhampered by public disapproval.

We begin to realize that these customs and traditions work out not only to the welfare of society but to our own advantage. We enjoy a sense of security because these laws are in operation and consciously or unconsciously we acquiesce to them, thus contributing our share towards stabilizing the social order.

This does not necessarily mean that the mere intellectual recognition of the rightness of things permits us to accept and abide by these laws, opinions, and beliefs without conscious effort. The fact that we recognize that certain types of conduct work out to our disadvantage



## Delinquency and Neuroses

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and that certain other types of behavior do not pay, is no assurance that we will not indulge ourselves in either or both. The ever-present examples of the way many apparently worthy and unquestionably intellectual citizens not only violate the manners and morals of the social group but indulge themselves and their appetites in conduct that brings them into conflict both with society and with their own ideals, bears witness to the fact that the mere intellectual recognition of what should be done is no assurance that the individual will do it.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the adolescent to draw sharp lines of distinction between behavior which will be approved and that which will be disapproved by the social group. As a matter of fact one may find such a variety of social standards within a radius of a few miles that one may indulge oneself in any type of activity with absolute approval of a fairly large social group.

It is not so long ago that public opinion was fairly definitely fixed in relation to such social problems as promiscuous petting, drinking among adolescents, respect for those in authority, and homosexuality; but if any one of these subjects were brought up in a gathering of intelligent parents to-day there would undoubtedly be those who would argue that there were many extenuating circumstances where any or all of these varied types of behavior should be condoned. This being true, when we come to deal with conduct and attitudes toward certain social institutions even more conflict exists. Questions of religion, marriage, divorce, business ethics, and parental authority are in such a state of confusion that each and every individual is called upon to make his or her own decisions.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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This is a responsibility that has been placed upon adolescents not by themselves but by the generation which preceded them and it increases tremendously the difficulty in starting out in life without a definite idea and objective or any clear conception of what they desire to achieve. The higher up we go in our educational system, the more conflict and the more chaos is introduced into the situation. Interesting and stimulating as much as the modern psychology has been, it has done but little to help in the solution of the conflicts created within the individual. Any stamp of approval which any group in society may put on a form of behavior may lessen the conflict between the individual and that particular group in society, but it does little or nothing to help the individual solve the conflict within himself. It must be borne in mind that the conflicts which are created between the individual and his own ego are very much more disintegrating, so far as mental health is concerned, than those created between the individual and society.

## CHAPTER IX

### PROBLEMS OF THE SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT

THE home is not the only environment responsible for the genesis of behavior problems; it is merely the most common because it is shared by the largest number of individuals. Every environment in which human beings live, work, and have their being has its special peculiarities to which the individual must adjust. In the school the environment is peculiar in that it consists of a large group of individuals of about the same age and frequently the same sex, who must compete and coöperate under rules and regulations that cannot possibly work out to the advantage of each and every individual student. There is also the adjustment to be made to various teachers whose personalities are necessarily varied and who in turn have their own personal problems of adjustment which are not infrequently aggravated by their contacts with individual students.

In industry, the environment may be peculiar in its physical set-up, of driving fanbelts, whirring engines, flashing switchboards, clicking typewriters, impatient customers, or exacting employers; in the army and navy, the monastery and convent, environmental peculiarities are likely to include rigorous discipline and varying degrees of sex segregation; the studio and the stage are peculiar in forcing upon individuals a matter-of-fact acceptance of various physical intimacies.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

The one peculiarity which all special environments share is that presumably they are not the environment in which the individual grew up and to which he first became adjusted. They all require a certain amount of readjustment; some of the old behavior patterns must be left behind as of no use in the new situation, and there will be other new ones which must be acquired. The problems arising in the course of this readjustment are therefore not all to be attributed to peculiarities or faults in the new environment, for many of them are due to the individual's difficulty in leaving the old environment. The boy who has become too dependent upon his mother's good-night kiss may have a problem of homesickness whether he goes to preparatory school, to camp, or merely to an uncle's farm; a girl who has always been told what to do and when and how from the time she gets up in the morning to the time she retires at night will seem to be lacking in initiative and a sense of responsibility whether she enters a shop, an office, or a college; and young people who have always had their own way at home are likely to run into various kinds of conflict when they try to carry over the tactics they used with their family in their relations with other people, whether the latter are college roommates, fellow campers, employers, co-workers, or partners in marriage.

It would not be possible here to enumerate all the environments which civilization creates for man, nor all the ways in which they differ from what is commonly looked upon as the normal environment—that is, the patriarchal family. It might be useful, however, to take one or two of those “special environments” to which the largest number of the adolescents under discussion are exposed, and

## Problems of the Special Environment

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point out some of their special pitfalls as illustrative of the subject in general.

### BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

The behavior problems of the adolescent in an educational institution have three distinct sources: (1) the home or other previous environment; (2) the adolescent himself; (3) the educational institution. The manifestations of maladjustment are in no way indicative of the source of the difficulty. Physical illness would ordinarily be regarded as having its source in the student himself, yet it might arise solely in response to his inability to fit into the new environment. On the other hand, a severe emotional upset, or even a complete mental breakdown, might be precipitated by some situation existing in the individual's home as, for example, the disintegration of the family through divorce, sickness, death, financial reverses, or perhaps some less obvious but even more devastating situation due to abnormal attachment between parent and child, or the struggle of the student to fulfill parental ambitions.

It has been estimated by various psychiatrists working with college students that from 5 to 10 per cent of the group are in need of psychiatric assistance. Ten per cent is undoubtedly a conservative estimate, while probably every student would be benefited by a well-rounded course on the subject of mental hygiene.

More and more it is being recognized that the college has a much broader and more significant function than that of simply training the intellect. Experience shows that there are altogether too many emotionally unstable,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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maladjusted individuals floating about with a college degree who are incapacitated from benefiting by their education because of the very process to which they have been subjected in acquiring it, or because everything in the general development of the individual that would tend to make him a useful member of society has been subordinated to the training of his intellect.

Institutions of education have had this problem to face for generations, but it has never been quite so acute or so demanding of attention as it is at the moment, when the applicants for college admission are beginning to outnumber the places available. Effort is being made by colleges and universities to select such candidates as give promise of emotional maturity as well as of intellectual ability, and to consider and provide for the emotional needs of the students as well as to develop their intellects.

During the past ten years much has been accomplished through introducing mental hygiene into the college curriculum, not only as a means of helping those in actual distress, but also as a subject of general interest and therapeutic value, available to the student body in general. It has repeatedly been remarked that the problems of the college student are not particularly different from the problems of the adolescent in general. Although there is reason to believe that those adolescents who have passed the examinations necessary for admission to college are intellectually superior to adolescents in general, they may still have similar emotional problems; moreover, they are subjected to an intellectual competition within the college group which brings with it as much mental stress and strain as does competition with the larger group outside. Even in the college group very definite intel-

## Problems of the Special Environment

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lectual limitations must still be recognized as the source of one of the most bitter conflicts in the life of the college students, *i.e.*, conflict arising between the individual's intellectual capacity and his ambition.

That the adolescent course passes dangerous shoals upon which many young lives are temporarily stranded has already been pointed out. The number of those stranded is probably unnecessarily large and could be greatly reduced if the available information with reference to mental health were utilized in charting their course.

This necessitates that masters and professors and educators in general be at least cognizant of the elementary principles of human behavior. The college need not be converted into an infirmary or sanatorium in order to accomplish this end; it would only require a sufficiently broad conception of education so as to include all aspects of the individual's mental life which are essential to living in a world where frequent and oftentimes radical adjustments are necessary.

This situation with regard to mental hygiene and the college is stated somewhat more briefly by Dr. Menninger as follows:

The factors in the production of maladjustment in college students are the same factors that are at work in other problems presented to psychiatric analysis. Their genesis is to be sought partly in the material, but more largely in the shaping of the material by the environment in its most plastic period—*i.e.*, childhood. Least important, although most conspicuous, are the strictures and stresses peculiar to the college itself; but in the rigor of the requirements of that particular life phase, plus the disturbances in biological, social, and psychological

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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economy that are taking place at the same time, one finds the precipitants of numerous breaks and threatened breaks. These, with varying degrees of success, the counselor in mental hygiene, psychiatrically equipped, can repair or avert.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the foregoing discussion would be applicable to the secondary boarding school or college preparatory school as well as to the college and the university. It is true that the secondary schools, dealing on the whole with a younger and less experienced group than the colleges and universities, do have some problems of their own, and are often confronted with behavior which is characteristic of the less mature adolescent.

Secondary schools are, for example, often preoccupied with the details of their students' social behavior—the neatness of their personal appearance; with table manners, and punctuality; with the attitudes of students toward one another, and the quantity and quality of respect they manifest toward their masters; and with innumerable other general problems concerning attitude of mind as well as actual behavior. The following reports are typical of behavior problems troubling the masters of the secondary school and less likely to occur in the college:

1. Asks stupid questions.
2. Talks incessantly, lacking in manners, likes to attract attention by making himself silly.
3. Accepted a dare to smoke.
4. Upsets the routine.
5. Is very conceited; pretended to have been practicing music lessons when he was actually out walking.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Menninger, "College Mental Hygiene" in *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. XI, No. 3, p. 535.



## Problems of the Special Environment

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6. Always the center of any noise and disorder.
7. Makes himself a general nuisance.
8. Strikes another boy.
9. Gets grouches and acts childish.
10. An indolent, lazy boy.
11. Willfully gets into mischief.
12. Seems to be a poor influence in the group.
13. Always tardy.
14. Seems to be simply lazy.
15. Acts resentful and surly.

Presumably such reports of conduct—no matter how important as indicative of the adjustment of secondary school pupils—would not be made by the college professor. Even if such behavior were manifested by the college student, the professor, unless he were also acting as counselor or special dean, would not be likely to consider it his province either to observe, report, or correct it.

In discussing the rôle of the university, Dr. Flexner draws a comparison that might well be used in this connection. He says, "To my mind, the difference between secondary and university education is the difference between immaturity and maturity. Secondary education involves responsibility of an intimate kind to the student, for the subject matter that he studies, even for the way in which he works, lives, and conducts himself—for his manners, his morals, and his mind. The university has no such complicated concern. At the university the student must take chances—with himself, with his studies, with the way in which he works."<sup>2</sup>

Yet despite the concepts of educators and the theories of mental hygienists, and despite the fact that the be-

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<sup>2</sup> Abraham Flexner, *Universities, American, English, German*, p. 28.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

havior problems occurring in the secondary schools may be on a somewhat more infantile or immature level than those occurring in the college, they are likely to have their genesis in the same early, home environmental situations and to be precipitated by similar circumstances in the new environment.

The following cases illustrate well the genesis of some of the situations which materialize as problems in the specialized environment of both the boarding school and the college.

*Beryl*, aged nineteen years, was a college freshman who was referred to the psychiatrist almost immediately upon her admission to college. She was depressed and complained of being unable to sleep, to think clearly, or to concentrate. She seemed much agitated and worried as to the outcome of her condition.

There seemed to be nothing of significance in her personal or family medical history. *Beryl* had always been a moody sort of girl—the worrying type. She was inclined to look upon the dark side of life, always anticipating difficulties which never happened. She had a strong attachment for her mother. The two always played about together, and the girl looked upon her mother as a play companion, preferring her company to that of other girls of her own age. Her mother was very proud of this affectionate tie-up and took great pleasure in referring to it as evidence of the happy relationship that always existed in the family.

In spite of the fact that *Beryl* did not make friends easily, she liked people and did not want to be alone. She found it difficult, however, on account of her shyness and diffidence to contribute her part toward making

## Problems of the Special Environment

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friendships, and, after venturing so far, she would invariably fall back upon her mother for consolation in this failure.

The problem was obviously one of the child's being emotionally so closely tied up with her mother that she had never freed herself from her dependence upon the home. The college was in a position to contribute much to this student through the psychiatrist and within a period of six weeks Beryl was making a place for herself, doing satisfactory work, and enjoying, for the first time, the satisfaction of being independent.

*Larry*, another nineteen-year-old freshman, was also seen by the psychiatrist during the first semester of his freshman year in college. He was referred because of a rather marked change in his attitude toward his work, and because he seemed to be gradually cutting himself off from social contacts. This boy welcomed the opportunity to discuss a home situation that had developed since his admission to college.

Both of this boy's parents had had previous marriages. The father, a man seventy years of age, had one son and one daughter by his first marriage. The mother, by her first marriage which had ended in divorce, had one daughter. The student, *Larry*, was the only child of the second marriage. The household was therefore composed of parts of three different families.

*Larry's* father was described by the boy as a peculiar individual with a domineering manner. He held a prominent and responsible position bringing him in contact with the public and giving him ample opportunity for blustering about a great deal. He was extremely jealous of his wife. Various other behavior manifestations de-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

scribed by the boy, seemed suggestive of the early symptoms of a mental disease.

The mother was much younger, had many interests, and was financially quite independent of Larry's father. There was always a good deal of friction and jealousy between the parents with reference to the children, and shortly after Larry's entrance to college, he was informed that divorce proceedings were pending. This upset him greatly. He feared the social stigma which he believed to be a part of such proceedings, and the humiliation of a public scandal to which, because of his father's holding public office, he thought he would be subjected. This had so affected him that he had lost much sleep and eaten poorly and had needed the immediate attention of the college physician. During this period of worry and anxiety his mother had been making frequent visits to discuss the family situation with him, always leaving him much upset emotionally, and necessarily interfering with his work and affecting his attitude toward all people. He became more and more withdrawn and reserved, avoiding, in so far as possible, all social contacts, and finally transferring to a large Western university where he could pursue his course of study with a reasonable hope of being unmolested by the impending family scandal.

This whole situation seemed to be so much a reflection of conditions created by the family of a boy who had previously been looked upon as well-adjusted, that the transfer was advised by the psychiatrist. It may be argued that the conflict lay within the boy himself and that he was simply running away from a difficult situation, but one must keep in mind that it is not necessary nor desirable to attempt to solve such conflicts under the most

## Problems of the Special Environment

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difficult conditions, and that oftentimes a change of environment offers a solution to such problems.

*Frieda* was an undergraduate student who was finding difficulty in adjusting to new surroundings. Her physical resistance was low, she slept poorly, was diffident and introspective, and found it difficult to express herself. She was having many conflicts over religion and would feel one moment that she must cling tightly to her own moral cloak, and the next she would be inclined to throw her old precepts away and accept something more modernistic and in keeping with the environment in which she found herself.

It appeared that her family were religious fanatics and, inasmuch as her mother had died just previous to the student's entering college, she had allowed this event to bind her more closely to the rigid, puritanical ideas of the family. She resented the critical attitude of her father who constantly complained of her lack of loyalty to the principles of her mother.

Eventually she, too, solved her problem by living more independently of her family influence and, on graduating from college, she made a very satisfactory teacher.

*Selma* was referred to the psychiatrist for being contrary, stubborn, and disobedient, and for running away from boarding school. This girl had a rather ordinary intellectual equipment. She was not physically attractive, and she was without what is commonly termed "charm."

Selma's parents reported that she made few friendships, usually seeking as her companions younger children whom she could dominate. They had observed that she was always careful to avoid environments in which she could not have her own way. She took only a passive interest

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

in sports. Although she seemed affectionate towards her parents, her general behavior at home was not much different from that reported by the school.

This girl's father was a rather stern disciplinarian who had succeeded in overcoming the mother's opposition in sending the daughter away to boarding school at the age of thirteen. Selma, finding competition in school work too keen, and being so immature in her social adjustment, regarded the school situation as quite intolerable. She did not stoop to meet it by undesirable conduct or by seeking refuge in illness, but by actually running away.

It was quite obvious that this girl was prematurely sent away from home in an effort on the part of interested parents to help her meet her problems. Failure might well have been expected, however, as the gulf between her home life of absolute dependence and the boarding school life for which she had been inadequately prepared, was too great.

A plan was made whereby the girl was enabled to attend day school. It was recommended that the father temper his strictness and the mother her over-solicitude in so far as possible, in an effort to arrive at a common attitude more healthy for the girl. Both parents were urged to think in terms of emancipating their daughter from her dependence on the family during the succeeding two years, making the process more gradual, and, at the same time, giving it greater assurance of success.

*Nathan*, aged thirteen years, was sent to the psychiatrist because he was extremely restless, engaging in much purposeless activity, lacking in manners, and very conceited.

This was a lad with an excellent intellectual equipment,

## Problems of the Special Environment

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who was falling down in his school work and making himself conspicuous in a most undesirable way by his silly clowning, bad manners and persistent activity that was annoying to all those with whom he came in contact. Back of all this behavior, which was ridiculed, punished, and condemned by all those with whom he came in contact, was a mental conflict with reference to the loss of his father who had committed suicide when the boy was eleven years of age.

Nathan had been very much attached to, and extremely dependent upon his father who had apparently been devoted to him. The fact that this boy was an overgrown, unattractive adolescent in the process of finding himself had apparently been overlooked by no one except the father. After his death criticism in some form or other had constantly been Nathan's lot—from family, masters, and students. As he found this more difficult to meet at school than at home, he concluded that he would prefer being expelled from school for bad behavior, to remaining and being constantly teased and criticized.

True as it may be that this boy was not meeting his problem as efficiently as one might expect of a lad of his age, he was quite unconscious of the forces with which he had to deal and his only chance to battle with them on even terms was through recognizing them, which the psychiatrist helped him to do.

Feelings of inferiority and of resentment arising through a student's comparison of his own economic status or his family background with those of other students are common foci of numerous troublesome behavior manifestations.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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*Elsie* was a college freshman, worried over her college work. She appreciated keenly her lack of cultural background. On account of her economic circumstances it was necessary for her to wait on table while at college. Not only did this take time away from her studies, but she was deeply humiliated at having to wait on others and felt that they would not want to associate with her socially.

After talking over this problem and discussing her attitude toward it, this student was able to meet her situation more satisfactorily. She presently found a good source of compensation for her feeling of inferiority by cultivating her talent in music.

*Stanley* was a college freshman giving all sorts of difficulty in the house in which he lived because of his play for attention. He seemed to be emotionally upset most of the time and could not accomplish his college work satisfactorily and did not hesitate to let every one know that he was without interest in all affairs connected with the college. He spent much time in the infirmary. He was looked upon by the other students as being most unreliable, and was always ready to receive attention and favors without ever showing any gratitude.

This student came from rather humble surroundings with uneducated parents, both of whom were working at unskilled occupations. He was very bitter and resentful toward his own social and economic situation. He felt that he had been cheated. This resentment was directed toward the social scheme of things in general, and in particular toward those with whom he came in contact in college, who appeared to have more of the material things of life.



## Problems of the Special Environment

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This student had a long and difficult task before he was able to meet successfully the ordinary problems of life with any degree of satisfaction.

The emotional conflicts over such resentment of the family situation are, of course, greatly intensified when a student is for any reason in constant touch with his home, as was the case with Louise and, to some extent, with Lucille.

*Louise* was attending college in her home town with the idea of becoming a teacher. Her father was a janitor in a large apartment building and part of his compensation was paid in rent for rooms in a less desirable part of the block. This girl had always been perfectly happy before entering college and the house had always been open to her friends. Upon entering college, however, she began to meet many girls of a quite different social standing. She became embarrassed and ashamed of her family situation and she falsified her position in order to continue the friendship of girls whose social situation she regarded as superior. She became extremely sensitive about her parents and their surroundings, fearing lest some one find out just what her true situation was.

She was suffering intensely from a sense of shame over her disloyalty to her family and this conflict increased as she tried to cover up her false position. She became quite incapacitated for work, got depressed, and couldn't sleep. Her ability to concentrate, and finally, her interest in people seemed to vanish.

It took much time to get her to face squarely the life situation which she was called upon to meet, and, on the one hand, to grasp the futility of building her life upon such a flimsy structure as deceit and falsification, and on

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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the other hand, to overcome her feelings of guilt about her attitude toward her parents and go on and play the game squarely from that point.

*Lucille's* situation was not unlike that of Louise, excepting that Lucille's anxiety was projected into the future and was not primarily concerned with the situation as it existed at the moment.

Lucille's father kept a small store in an undesirable section of a large city and just managed to eke out an existence after contributing to the student's support at college. Lucille made frequent visits home in order to check up on the stock, and help her father make collections and pay bills. According to her description her home was small, poorly furnished, and usually cluttered up, and she was beginning to appreciate more and more the contrast between her home and the homes of the girls with whom she was making contact in college. She appreciated that her parents were uncultured, uneducated, and unwilling to be changed in any way, and, although she had a strong feeling of responsibility and obligation toward them, she was bitter and resentful against her own social and economic situation in life.

Lucille was already thinking in terms of how she could avoid spending the summer in the store, and at the same time contribute her share toward her education. Not only were her parents dependent upon her for material help, but they were also very much wrapped up in her emotionally.

This situation is an example of a girl who had been feeding the emotional life of the family and who was torn between getting out and utilizing her education to her own advantage, or returning home to satisfy the desires of her

## Problems of the Special Environment

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mother and father who had contributed toward, and made possible, her education.

The two preceding cases represent one of the most painful and insoluble conflicts with which adolescents have to deal. There is no gulf quite so deep and no barrier between child and parent quite so insurmountable as that created by education and consequent divergent cultural standards. Frankness and honest endeavor on the part of children and parents contribute much to the solution of this problem, yet in many instances there is still a difficult situation left. In these situations the child's future must eventually be built in a world quite unknown to the parents and one in which they can have but a very limited participation. The new friendships, brought about by the advantages of the education provided by the parents, are often not easily shared with parents whose social, intellectual, and cultural background may have been limited not only by their economic condition but also by old-world standards. Even when honest efforts are made to introduce the newly acquired culture into the home, the experiences are likely to lead to nothing but pain and humiliation both for the parents and for the child.

Out of it all parents must find their consolation in the achievements of their children. The rearing and education of children is our debt to posterity and perhaps we should not expect repayment. We pay our parents for what they did for us by what we do for the generation ahead.

Physical and mental handicaps are among the more self-evident reasons for failure to adjust well to life away

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

from the accustomed and sheltered home environment. Aside from the obvious deformities and defects which noticeably handicap the individual, and are definitely recognized both by himself and others as obstacles to readily fitting into new situations, there are inadequacies and weaknesses of a more obscure nature. It is not unusual to find adolescents subjected to mental stress and physical strain for which their constitutional make-up is unsuited, and to see them endeavoring to carry a burden which is (either mentally or physically or both) just beyond their strength. This situation may be brought about through the individual's unwillingness to recognize his own limitations, or through ignorance, or through undue ambition on the part of the parents, or perhaps through poor medical advice.

*Edna* was seen by the psychiatrist at the age of seventeen, at the beginning of her freshman year in college. The college physician had reported that *Edna* was not strong physically, that she had very little vitality, and that she showed a great deal of nervous tension.

This student was an extremely reserved, shy, and diffident young woman and had always found it difficult to make friends, even in the rural district from which she came. She was the worrying type of individual, and, although she had done average work in high school, there had been constant anxiety on her part over not doing better.

Inquiry into a "physical breakdown" which *Edna* had had in high school showed clearly that mental, rather than physical symptoms predominated. At this time she had been troubled by weird and terrifying dreams and had had sensations of sinking through the floor. She had also

## Problems of the Special Environment

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had hysterical attacks during which she tossed herself about on the bed at night and was unable to sit quietly during the day. She had also manifested some involuntary twitching of the muscles, and on one occasion she had walked in her sleep. The incident which precipitated this breakdown was a relationship with a teacher who was extremely cold and forbidding and exacting in her demands of the students, and of whom Edna had a great fear. Both the girl's mother and father, particularly the latter, had showed great anxiety for their daughter, and, according to Edna's account, she had scarcely been able to turn over in bed but that one of them had hastened to her side.

In spite of their anxiety, however, the parents refused to recognize the fact that their child was mentally sick, and they discouraged her from accepting the help available from a psychiatrist.

It seemed obvious that this student, with a highly unstable, nervous make-up, and an intellectual and cultural background so inadequate to the demands of the highly complex environment in which she found herself, would inevitably meet with failure. Neither the student nor the parents would, however, consider withdrawal from college, and Edna carried on until the end of the year, accomplishing a passing grade. The recurrence of her symptoms the following year necessitated her leaving college.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It is of interest to note that the ambition of this student was to be a teacher—a profession needing the most stable and mature type of personality. There is no profession in the world in which the neurotic type of individual can do more harm, both to herself and to others, than in the teaching profession.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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If the college authorities had had in advance such information about this student as was gathered during the first few weeks of her residence in college, it would have been quite clear that she should have been advised to postpone her entrance to college until she was in better physical and mental condition. Even then, she was the type of person who would have done much better and would have been much happier and more adequate in a small college where the adjustment of her whole life would have been less complicated.

The institution itself presents situations which may evoke doubts and misgivings even among those who are well endowed physically and mentally, and whose emotional attitude toward life is mature. Some of these students may, for example, come to college expecting emotionally satisfying and intellectually stimulating friendships with their fellow students. Possibly they have looked upon the college professor as a person of great intellectual attainments with a broad cultural background, a dynamic and stimulating personality, and some mysterious power for making knowledge easily attainable and life itself more interesting. If their fellow students turn out to be superficial, immature young people who seem to be seeking only "snap courses" and gayety, if their instructors turn out to be not only very ordinary but even very drab human beings who are often not as human as those preceptors left behind in the preparatory school, if family background appears to count for more than personal merit and honest effort, and if social popularity seems to be valued above academic achievement, these students are likely to undergo a period of prolonged dis-

## Problems of the Special Environment

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appointment; in the face of their unrealized hopes and ambitions, they lose even their chief assets—their self-confidence and sense of security, and all effort seems futile. These students may, if unnoticed and unaided, flounder about for a long time without finding themselves, and their scholastic and social adjustment to college life may be so long delayed that failure becomes almost inevitable.

To the younger adolescents, the disillusionments and disappointments may come in finding that the boarding school roommate is not at all the generous and admirable boy—or the lovable girl—created by their imaginations, (stimulated by Christmas gift books); or perhaps in discovering that traditions and ideals dear to them are scoffed at by others.

Then, too, specific courses of study may give rise to perplexities. Courses in philosophy, history of religion, and in geology, biology, and astronomy may raise new questions concerning the nature of a universe which had previously been accepted rather matter-of-factly. (See the case of Frieda, p. 281.)

Courses dealing objectively with abnormalities not infrequently lead to subjective speculation on the part of the student as to his own possible abnormalities, either to the point of his actually simulating some of the symptoms of abnormality, or to the point of acute anxiety and depression. Such reactions are illustrated in the case of Harvey.

*Harvey* was a nineteen-year-old college freshman. There was nothing in his history to indicate that, prior to his emotional upset, he was not what is generally termed a "well-balanced" boy. His home life was happy,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

and he had reached the stage of maturity where he was independent of family. He was a good student, interested and successful in athletics and was generally considered popular in college. Within a comparatively short time after the beginning of his sophomore year, however, he became depressed, refused to attend classes, stayed in bed, and appeared to have no interest in seeing people or participating in any of the various activities going on in the college environment.

At the end of a few days, his condition was reported to the authorities by one of his friends, and the psychiatrist was asked to interview him. It appeared from a talk with Harvey that the precipitating factor in his acute mental upset was a course of lectures in abnormal psychology. As these lectures progressed Harvey had begun to identify himself with all the symptoms that were designated as belonging to the dementia præcox group. He had been told that a visit would be made to one of the near-by institutions, and he had begun to look upon this visit with horror.

There was no history of mental disease in his family, and it was impossible to determine what had conditioned this otherwise stable lad to this fear of mental disease. Although he was deeply concerned about himself, he was anxious to get the facts of the situation regardless of what they were, and with a comparatively few conferences, the whole situation was straightened out in his mind and there was no history of any recurrence during his college course.

This acute mental upset offered this student an opportunity of getting a more healthy point of view on life, and undoubtedly solved other conflicts that were less evident, but perhaps no less important.



## Problems of the Special Environment

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A similar case is that of Winfield, which is here summarized briefly.

*Winfield* had suffered from the age of eleven on from attacks of migraine. After entering college he found, in one of his courses in psychology, that several authors had drawn attention to the fact that there was a very close relationship between migraine and epilepsy. Winfield visited one of the institutions for the insane with the class and saw several epileptics there. He began to fear that he might develop epilepsy or some form of mental disease. This anxiety was solved in a large measure through conferences with the psychiatrist.

In most educational institutions there is at least one example of the student who finds himself unpleasantly submerged in one way or another and stumbles about in his efforts to find some means of becoming popular or prominent.

*Wilbur*, a boy of twenty years of age, was referred by the college because of his poor work and apparent indifference.

This boy came from a small New England town where he had played an important part in social activities. He had also done well in his studies, was interested in athletics, and was referred to by the principal of his school as being an "all-round good fellow with considerable promise."

Wilbur had come to college with much interest and enthusiasm, ambitious to prepare himself for entering the medical school. Anticipating that he would soon assume the same rôle of importance in college as he had in high school, his early disappointments were concerned

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

chiefly about being ignored. He had anticipated certain attention from upper classmen which did not materialize, and in his disappointment over this, he neglected opportunities of making friends with those in his own class. He found competition on the football field so keen that he was relegated to the squad of the second team which was an unhappy experience. He was sufficiently perturbed over these social and athletic failures to allow them to interfere with his application to his work and he soon found himself in difficulty with the faculty.

In this unhappy and disgruntled state he began to blame the college for his failure and was soon looked upon as a chronic grouch. This was probably one reason why he was not selected for a fraternity. As his emotional problems piled up, he began to pay less attention to his work, and when he was seen by the psychiatrist he was going around in a vicious circle and each move seemed to make life more complicated and unhappy and to make college less and less desirable.

Although this state of mind prevented the boy from finishing his first year successfully, he did get life itself in its proper perspective, learning the necessity of meeting failure as well as success, and reaching a stage of maturity where he realized just what had brought about his failures. He returned to college the next year well equipped to meet the demands of the environment.

*Sidney* was a thirteen-year-old boy who was finding it difficult to make a place for himself in his school during the second year. It appeared that this boy, with good intellectual equipment, had been the youngest and smallest boy in the school during his first year. He became the pet of the older boys who had given him a good deal of

## Problems of the Special Environment

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their time and attention. But interests of this sort do not last long with youth, and, upon returning his second year he found that he was just one of the group. His first attempt to regain his former popularity was by seeking a position that would bring him in the limelight. But even here he was overlooked and passed by unnoticed, and at times reprimanded. He began to fail in his school work, and was soon seeking refuge in the infirmary, under the guise of having various types of imaginary ills.

*Sam*, a fifteen-year-old boy, after having lost the prestige and popularity which he had gained by his ability to amuse and entertain his fellows, resorted to certain types of delinquent activity to regain his lost position. He tried to get the public eye by doing various things which the school forbade, such as smoking, keeping lights on after bells, being late to meals, and being impertinent to the masters.

Both of these boys were intellectually superior to the average boy in their group, but both were emotionally immature, and needed help in order that they might meet the ordinary everyday problems of life with less difficulty.

Conduct of this type must always be interpreted in terms of the individual's past experience, and we must therefore guard against giving too much weight to what seems to be the obvious cause or causes of these behavior difficulties. It is invariably the result of efforts on the part of the individual to attain certain goals in life and strivings toward these goals have very definite directions. Dr. John T. MacCurdy expresses them as follows:

1. Bodily pleasure, such as desire for food, drink and creature comforts, and bodily sensations of a pleasant nature.
2. Intellectual curiosity; desire for new experience.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

3. A lust for power and for exhibiting it.
4. A lust for recognition.
5. Desire for security.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the problems which occur in secondary schools during the early part of adolescence are the result of the individual's desire for power and recognition.

Peggy was an individual of this type who went on with such activity after entering college. She indulged herself in moods and caused more or less consternation among her associates as she bemoaned her fate and her artistic temperament which she was sure would lead her to great emotional instability and eventually to suicide.

As Peggy discussed this subject with the psychiatrist, she was obviously much upset over the fact that he showed no concern over her unhappy state. She stressed her misery and said, referring to her college course, "I think it is terrible for any one to be put away for four years without any chance of getting out."

It was perfectly clear that this student was filled with self-pity and was seeking an opportunity to put herself in the center of the stage by dramatizing the ordinary everyday situations of life. She is but another example of an adolescent who was not grown up, who was failing to find real satisfactions in meeting reality as it actually existed, and was getting what attention she could by playing a part.<sup>5</sup> Such individuals are much in need of help in order that they may mature emotionally and prepare themselves to be independent and meet responsibility on an adult level.

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<sup>4</sup> John T. MacCurdy, *Problems in Dynamic Psychology*, pp. 273-4.

<sup>5</sup> For similar cases see Chapter V, pp. 116ff., and Chap. VII, pp. 202-3.

## Problems of the Special Environment

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### HOMOSEXUAL ATTACHMENTS

Colleges and boarding schools for either boys or girls, men or women, are environments which tend to favor varying degrees of intimate friendships between those of the same sex. These friendships are often looked upon with question by the students as well as the authorities.

The significance of these intimate relationships, often called "crushes," has already been discussed in the chapter dealing with the adolescent's adjustment to his maturing sex drives. (See p. 60.) The fact that they are to some extent fostered by the special environmental circumstances of school or college possibly warrants a little repetition here.

When fully developed, these relationships are characterized by intense devotion of one or both parties involved and invariably lead to one of the parties getting hurt emotionally. They result in misunderstanding, quarreling, jealousy and oftentimes various types of neurotic manifestations which are utilized for the purpose of getting or holding the attention of the one whose affections seem to be on the wane.

Associated with these attachments there may be evidences of physical attraction and attempts at sexual gratification—kissing, fondling, sleeping together in embrace, and mutual masturbation. This overt activity is found, however, in only a limited number of cases.

During early adolescence these relationships usually exist between a younger pupil and an upper classmate who has some mark of distinction—physical attractiveness, outstanding literary, dramatic, or musical talents, athletic ability, or qualities of leadership. Sometimes the

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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object of adoration is a teacher and as some teachers seem more likely to be the objects of the student's affections than others, this is at times the cause of considerable embarrassment to them and sometimes results in the loss of their positions. Occasionally, however, such devotions pass by unnoticed by any one except the individual himself who would be much embarrassed if he thought for a moment that any one knew of his feelings. Such admirations need not cause any great concern, for they represent a perfectly normal phase in the process of growing up. Yet they should not be completely ignored, for they are the source from which many of the more serious problems are recruited at college age.

The child who is continually getting "crushes" on a teacher, master or some other pupil, is invariably seeking an emotional satisfaction which would normally be supplied in the home; or he may be suffering from a feeling of inferiority which prevents him from making the normal contacts with those of his own age. Whatever the cause may be, it is the wisdom with which the situation is handled that really counts.

When these attachments occur at the college age, they must be considered more seriously as they give evidence of immaturity. At this period crushes seem split up into groups, all of which have some characteristic features which aid in evaluating their importance and in concluding whether or no interference is necessary or desirable.

To the first group belong those individuals, usually girls, whose emotions are very volatile and are likely to spill over easily. They flit from "crush" to "crush," just doting on Mary, and then on Jane, expressing this devotion in terms of endearments, and possibly showing

## Problems of the Special Environment

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some inclination to paw people over. Their experiences seem to contain none of the element which craves intimate physical contact. Homosexuality even as a term, may be unknown to these individuals. The disapproval of the group is usually sufficient to modify their behavior and there is no deep-seated emotional turmoil to deal with. There is little need for more than kindly advice from some sympathetic person in whom the girl has confidence. This type is subsequently illustrated in the case of Marsella (see pp. 300*ff.*).

To the second large group belong those who become involved in a serious emotional relationship—a “real affair,” either as the passive or active party. There is less of the scattering of affections in this group, but much greater intensity. Invariably one of the parties to this attachment tries to absorb the other, resenting any other attention that may be given or received, and being extremely jealous and demanding. The arrangement is invariably an unhappy one and occasionally leads to some tragic ending.

There are no figures to indicate how many of these individuals entering into this tense emotional relationship are the victims of a thwarted love life at home, but one is impressed by the fact that such is often the case—that the affair often began on the basis of a sympathetic understanding of a common life situation. The adolescents find in these affairs a substitute for a lack of parental understanding, a mother who has died, a father who is unaffectionate, or, occasionally, a heterosexual experience that has not turned out successfully. For an illustration of this second type see the case of Madoline (pp. 302*ff.*).

These relationships mean much to those involved and must be managed with sympathy, tact and understanding.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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and not in the forbidding, cold, repelling manner that comes of a fear lest some one be contaminated.

The third group is equally worthy of consideration and consists of the intelligentsia of the homosexuals who are rather prone to play about in groups. They have a philosophical and intellectual approach to the phenomenon of homosexuality, rather than any strong, unsatisfied sex urge in which the emotions are dominant. As they are passing through this phase they dress in manish attire; they take male rôles in theatricals, invariably doing well; they read much to find a philosophical justification for their activity; and they quote glibly from Oscar Wilde and Radclyffe Hall or refer to contributions recently made by the theater to the public's understanding of the conflict that may arise when a homosexually conditioned person tries to make a heterosexual adjustment to life. This type is illustrated in the case of Yvonne (see pp. 303ff.).

This is an interesting and intelligent group of young people venturing forth with courage to preach a doctrine in which they believe, even though it be but temporarily. If it were not for the fact that they gather around them a number of followers of less stability and intelligence to worship at the temple of their cult, little harm would be done. All too frequently, however, the young disciples get lost when they make these excursions into philosophical justifications for abnormal behavior and they flounder about hopelessly confused.

In the process of finding themselves they get out of touch with their real job and oftentimes end up by flunking out of college.

*Marsella* was a freshman in college with superior intel-



## Problems of the Special Environment

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lectual ability, who was falling down in her academic work. She was referred to the psychiatrist because of her demonstrations of affection toward her roommate, making it undesirable for the latter to continue living with her.

Marsella was the only child of very intelligent parents who were said to have "showered everything upon her." They had been unrestrained in their demonstrations of affection for her. She had grown up perfectly devoted to her father, never losing any opportunity to be with him and finding a great deal of satisfaction in their intimate emotional relationship. On coming to college, her habits and need of affection continued, and she transferred her demonstrativeness from her father to her roommate, to the disadvantage of both.

When the subject was discussed with the student and the situation explained in its relation to her past, and a plan arranged whereby she might live alone in another dormitory, she coöperated readily; but within a few weeks she was showing quite as much devotion to one of her instructors, causing the latter as much annoyance as she had formerly caused her roommate. The instructor was the type of person who was much disgusted by "this sort of thing," and instead of helping the student overcome her difficulty, merely expressed disgust and displeasure. Marsella gave up the relationship without a great deal of reluctance, however, and shortly became attached to another student.

During these periods of attachment she would indulge in much daydreaming, writing sentimental poems, and living a life of phantasy in so far as it was possible. All during this period she continued having conferences with the psychiatrist, and in spite of temporary difficulties,

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

she made continuous headway toward developing a more mature attitude toward her friends. By the beginning of her junior year, she had developed so far emotionally that she had established several good friendships with various students, among them, her former roommate.

At no time during these experiences was this student aware of any element of sex attraction in these various associations. She showed all these people much attention for the time being, but always gave them up without a great deal of reluctance when she saw that these attachments were working out to her disadvantage. There was little evidence of any deep, underlying homosexual trend. Yet this is typical of a fairly large number of cases causing much comment among the student body and much anxiety on the part of college authorities.

*Madoline* was another student with superior intellectual equipment whose academic accomplishments were falling below the required average. She was a young woman with a most pleasing personality and a great deal of poise and charm. She had obviously enjoyed considerable popularity with her associates.

As in many of these cases, the genesis of this student's strong attachments toward several of her classmates was in a home situation. This student's father was a busy, successful business man, who felt that he had but little time to devote to the family. He was kindly, considerate, and generous, giving freely of everything but of his time. The mother was socially inclined and attempted to find her amusements outside the home. These social contacts, although never undesirable, were frequently of such a nature as would lead to arguments and petty quarrels with her husband. In these *Madoline* was en-

## Problems of the Special Environment

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tirely out of sympathy with her mother, feeling sorry for her father and being convinced that "Mother was not a good sport."

On coming to college, Madoline established a very close friendship with another girl who had also had an unpleasant home situation to meet. This friendship grew to such an intensity that it became a matter of concern to the college authorities and caused more or less gossip among the students. Under these conditions Madoline's friend tired of the relationship, or at least saw the lack of wisdom in pursuing it, and her willingness to break it off led to much misunderstanding, jealousy, quarreling, and unreasonable demands, which so frequently terminate these relationships.

Madoline was seen in a hospital where she was obliged to spend her vacation, being in a completely fatigued and emotionally upset state. She was suffering from a marked depression, and entertained the idea that life was not worth while. With psychiatric assistance over a period of several months she ultimately made a very satisfactory adjustment to life. On her return to college, she cultivated friendships with many girls, and began to include young men in her circle of friends, reacting to them in an entirely normal way.

Like the other students discussed in this section, *Yvonne* was particularly well endowed intellectually, and the problem of her emotional relationships originated in an unsatisfactory relationship to her family.

From her earliest recollections Yvonne was out of harmony with her mother and consciously used her as a means of gaining her ends, avoiding all the intimacies that usually exist between mother and daughter, and limiting

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

the social contact between them in so far as possible. She lost no opportunity of humiliating her on social occasions, and always tried to impress her with the idea that she was entirely to blame for the strained relationship between them.

This family had a history of much moving about with comparatively short stays in various places, preventing this student from making the social contacts and long-standing friendships that are so important during adolescence. Yvonne had no boy friends whatsoever, and only an occasional friendship of any duration with girls. On entering college, she had been induced to go into dramatics where she had been very successful in masculine rôles, and presently she had begun to assume a mannish type of dress for campus wear. In this way she began to attract the attention of a certain group of interesting but frequently discontented students. Her room soon became the headquarters of what was termed the "homosexual element" of the college, and she began to preach this doctrine in such an insidious way that she was soon looked upon by the college as a real menace. Some of her disciples got so much involved in her philosophy of life and emotionally so disrupted that failure or at least low standing in college work became common in this particular group; yet there was no evidence of overt homosexuality on the part of this student, or indeed any reason to believe that she had serious inclinations toward such practices. It was apparent that she was merely utilizing this behavior as a means of securing for herself recognition from the college authorities and prestige among a group of her fellow students, as a compensation for her sense of social insecurity up to this time.

## Problems of the Special Environment

It is obvious that the educational institution with all its social implications may be a more difficult environment to adjust to than would the factory or office for those adolescents whose meager cultural background and limited social experience would be likely to give them a sense of inadequacy in the school or college. In industry and business where real ability is more important than social grace in getting one's self established, and where there are fewer ways of escape from that which is unpleasant or painful—retreat into illness, for example, having an undesirable effect on earnings and advancement—the individual often shows more effort and interest. This is perhaps the explanation why many of those who fail in college make good later on in business. For many, too, the industrial world offers a greater challenge; it brings them in closer contact with the realities of life and leaves less time and offers less encouragement for daydreaming.

### BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN INDUSTRY

The importance of the selection of a vocation and the relationship between efficiency and emotional satisfaction to mental health, is a subject that has been attracting the attention of employers, industrial efficiency experts, and clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, for the past two decades; yet it is only within very recent years that educators have given this momentous problem the consideration which it deserves.

The problems of adjustment are quite as numerous and varied in the shop, office and factory as they are in the home, school or camp, and should be entitled to the same consideration. Yet it is quite generally assumed that go-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

ing to work is in itself sufficient evidence of maturity and from that point on the individual is left pretty much to his own resources to sink or swim, as the case may be, unless, perchance, he is fortunate enough to find employment with some firm that is interested in fitting the job to the individual; otherwise, he must trust to the method of trial and error to find that place in the industrial scheme which is best suited to his own particular pattern.

As civilization has progressed the problem of selecting a vocation has become more difficult. Specialization has reached a point where not only the individual's general intellectual ability but also his special abilities and particular personality traits must be taken into consideration, if success is to be achieved. Measurements of acuity of vision, hearing, accuracy in observation, precision of motor coördination, and of many other faculties are now looked upon as essential in the selection of candidates for highly specialized work. The marked individual variations and the limited rôle of perseverance in improving such faculties has been more clearly recognized since industry has given them greater significance.

The problem of vocational guidance cannot rest on the ability of the advisor to measure intellectual equipments. He must be able to uncover and measure these special abilities and disabilities and to consider intellectual endowment in relation to personality make-up. It is not an easy task. It involves not only much knowledge of human nature but also knowledge of the particular vocation which the adolescent is desirous of pursuing. There is also much to be done in devising ways and means of measuring the various elements that compose the ingredients of intellect and personality.

## Problems of the Special Environment

The realization that various tasks require not only different levels but also different types of intelligence, and that simply because an individual is so endowed intellectually that he might successfully pursue the vocation of teaching, ministry, medicine, or law, it does not follow that he will not be happier and more efficient in business, engineering, or farming, is in itself an indication of progress. The job should be fitted to the individual emotionally as well as intellectually. This ideal, of course, can only be carried out within certain limits. Industrial competition is too keen to permit of much sentiment in business, so that the individual is to a very large extent dependent upon himself and his vocational advisors to get into the right church even though he misses the pew best suited to his needs.

*Clara* was referred to the psychiatrist by her college dean who doubted the advisability of this student's continuing with her academic education. Clara was at this time a sophomore in college and was displaying a very peculiar and resentful attitude toward life in general and all authority in particular.

This student was an only child who had been brought up in a small New England village where she had spent a happy but very uneventful childhood. Her experience with life and with people was extraordinarily limited and she seemed to have little desire and little capacity for enlarging it. She had come to college to take a secretarial course but because of her limitations she found the work very difficult and the struggle to keep up with her classmates, according to her own admission, wore her out physically and mentally. She was also sensitive to noise and found the noises of her college environment far more

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

fatiguing than those at home. Her general state of fatigue made it necessary for her to go to her room for extra sleep during the day.

The pathetic feature of Clara's story was that she had taken a thorough dislike to the course and to the vocation itself. This dislike was so intense that it was highly improbable that she would ever be able to do secretarial work. Consequently all this struggle over keeping up the work was quite pointless and useless and led to no goal whatever. When this fallacy was pointed out to her she became confused and confessed that she did not understand herself clearly. She stated that she was seeking help and wanted advice as to what to do, and yet every suggestion that she change her course and prepare herself for some other vocation was resented by her.

Unfortunately she insisted upon muddling along until she was finally dropped from college and returned to her home, having failed in her efforts to meet successfully the task which she set out to do, and what is even more pathetic, failing to get from the experience that which would help her meet her future problems.

This case is an example of the failure on the part of the advisor to do for this particular individual what was essential in order to change her point of view. Some one else might well have been successful.

Parents are not the only ones to make serious mistakes in vocational planning. Some of the gravest mistakes are perhaps not made by parents at all, but by the world's minor and major philanthropists—kind-hearted, generous men and women who wish to give some less well-situated person a great opportunity to improve himself. They



## Problems of the Special Environment

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may merely plan to help a poor relative or the child of a kindly shopkeeper, or they concentrate on their servants and their offspring, or they may establish a fund to be administered in a circumscribed fashion to a hypothetical group of beneficiaries, without ever realizing that these beneficiaries, through no fault of their own, are not worthy recipients of this charity; and they are cruelly disappointed when their investments fail to yield the expected return—when the boy who was given the musical education of a Caruso fails to make the operatic stage; when the girl sent to college to become a missionary, becomes an agnostic; or when any of these young men and women do poor work, fail their courses, and flunk out of school or college because of lack of ability or other definite handicap.

*Mabel* was sent to the psychiatrist by the superintendent of the nurses' training school which she was attending. She had been in training only one month but the superintendent had found her to be so nervous and so easily confused that she had recommended a psychiatric examination. This young woman had had a physical examination before being admitted to the training school and appeared to be in good health. Her nervousness seemed, therefore, to be due not to any physical disturbance but to her inability to understand what she was expected to do, and her failure to comprehend simple instructions.

The psychiatric examination quickly showed that this young woman was really very backward. She answered simple questions regarding her childhood fairly well but was unable to make the simplest mathematical computations and gave absurd answers to very elementary ques-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

tions in geography and history. She was completely ignorant of any current events, being uncertain as to who was president of the United States, or mayor of her city, nor was she much more familiar with any of the figures prominent in sports, screen, or scandal sections of the newspaper. She knew very little about the hospital in which she had been living and working for an entire month and volunteered that she really couldn't understand what the work was all about; she added that she guessed she was rather dumb and, as a child, had never been as bright as other children.

The superintendent was advised that Mabel was unsuited for nursing, and it was then discovered that this superintendent had been very unwilling to accept the girl in the first place, as her academic background had been inferior to that ordinarily required. She had finally taken her on probation because of the pleas of Mabel's former employer—a philanthropic woman with considerable influence in the community. The latter had employed Mabel for two years in some domestic capacity, and, being very eager to help the girl improve her position in life, had made special arrangements for securing a nurse's training course for her without having taken into consideration her unfitness for this work.

Just as the students bring their problems with them to the boarding school or college, so the adolescents entering industry through the factory, shop, or office, may be handicapped by some personality traits, habits, and mental attitudes which are entirely dependent upon their previous experience and life. The conflict which results either with themselves, with their coworkers, or with their

## Problems of the Special Environment

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employers, and the lack of satisfaction and the inability to achieve what their intellectual equipments would warrant can only be understood when their present difficulties are interpreted in terms of their past experiences.

*Harry* was an eighteen-year-old boy who, previous to his upset, had always been looked upon as normal. He was referred to a psychiatrist because he had experienced a peculiar spell during which he had got up out of bed and wandered about confused and disoriented, without knowing who he was or where he was, and without recognizing the people with whom he had been living for a period of months. His confusion cleared up in twenty-four hours but his mind was still blank as to what had actually occurred.

This boy was working for the first time in his life. He had been educated abroad in a haphazard sort of way, traveled about, spent money freely without having any obligations in life, and apparently no one had taken any responsibility for him. It finally occurred to his father that he ought to be getting to work so he shipped the boy from abroad to his paper mills in Maine. There was no desire on the part of the boy to go to work, especially in an office, but sufficient pressure was exerted on him, and he finally arrived in a rather resentful state of mind. He soon made it known that he was the owner's son and entitled to consideration. In this way he became very unpopular with his fellow employees. He was "razzed" and ignored in turn. He argued with his immediate superior and made himself offensive in many ways. He got depressed and unhappy and finally the situation became so unpleasant that he was ready to give up, run away, or do anything to get away. He could not bring himself to

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

actually quit and consciously admit failure, but the hysterical episode served his purpose.

Illness may serve as a satisfactory excuse for failure. It can be accepted by the individual as a self-respecting way out so long as the motives remain on an unconscious level. This is not at all an unusual problem, but again illustrates how a neurosis may serve as a compromise between poor equipment for a job and the necessity of carrying on.

*Susan* came from a rather humble home. Her father and mother were uneducated and uncultured laboring people who had struggled hard to make it possible for their only daughter to achieve a college education. She worked hard and upon graduation was prepared to do secretarial work. All her life she had been quite conscious of the limitations of her own social background. She bent over backward in order that she might never push herself into any social situation where her presence might be questioned in any way or where she herself was not absolutely sure that she was acceptable to every one present. In fact, by her aloofness, she obliged all those with whom she came into contact and who desired to be friendly with her, to do more than their share. In spite of this attitude, she had several real friends and made a place for herself during her college course.

On leaving college Susan obtained a position as private secretary, and by virtue of her efficiency and application, was soon promoted to the job of managing a small office and supervising a group of stenographers. Her retiring manner and somewhat forbidding attitude was looked upon as an effort on her part to demonstrate to those in

## Problems of the Special Environment

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subordinate positions her own superiority. This naturally did not contribute to her popularity, and she soon became concerned herself about the fact which had been made quite obvious to her that she was not liked. Although deeply hurt by not having made a place for herself with the other employees, she became very critical, sarcastic, and cut herself off entirely from everything but the most formal contacts with her coworkers. The quality and the quantity of her work in the office fell off in a very noticeable way. She was not only unhappy and less efficient herself, but all those working under her felt the sting and injustice of her criticism. It was finally decided that she should go away for a vacation as her superiors recognized that she was getting nervous, irritable, and quite high-strung.

While she was on this sick leave she consulted a psychiatrist. At this time she was complaining of headaches, insomnia, and extreme fatigue. The whole situation was carefully studied. A physical examination and laboratory tests revealed nothing that could in any way account for her symptoms. Her employers reported that she was exceptionally well-trained, had extraordinary executive ability, but was inclined to antagonize people with whom she worked; she got on well with her superiors.

After considerable study, the answer to her problem was found in her relationship with her parents, who had always been unwilling to allow her to develop her own independence. She had never been allowed to forget the sacrifices they had made in order to allow her "to be a lady"; nor was she allowed to advance very far on a higher social and cultural level before she was reminded of her own humble beginnings. Finally she had developed

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

a very twisted and distorted point of view on life in general, and was constantly trying to run away from both past and family.

When these problems were presented in a way that she could view them objectively, they lost much of the incapacitating emotional element, and after she had advanced to the point where she could treat life, past, present, and future, intellectually and objectively, she returned to her job. In spite of the bad start, she soon made a place for herself with her coworkers without in any way interfering with her efficiency.

Lee graduated from high school at the age of eighteen and entered the employment of a small trust company where he worked along in a very satisfactory way to himself and to the firm for about three years. He was looked upon as being efficient, dependable, and popular. Quite unexpectedly, his firm entered into a merger with one of the largest banking houses in the country, and he found himself completely confused by the complexity of his new situation. He was now working in a department which had one hundred and fifty employees instead of six, and the friendly, personal attitude that had previously existed in the old job had now completely disappeared.

However, he carried on from May until October, and all during this period he was unhappy and extremely concerned about his security in his new position. His confidence to carry on was finally completely lost, and he appeared before the company nurse much agitated and all atremble, saying that the job was too much for him, and that he must be released. A short time later, in talking with his immediate supervisor, he complained that he was being watched by one of his fellow workers who was

## Problems of the Special Environment

out to get him. During this interview, he cried bitterly and said that he was "no good."

The bank reported that the boy had outstanding ability as demonstrated thus far. It was pointed out that the work was very mechanical in the beginning, and that there were few opportunities in the elementary departments of providing a change from one type of work to another. His immediate superior informed him that in view of the nation-wide depression and the fact that mergers do overstock the personnel, he must take his turn with people older in years and service, and that he had already been recognized as having ability which, in itself, would mean much to him in the future.

The bank in which he was employed was sufficiently interested in this boy to send him to a psychiatrist who viewed the problem as a reaction of a particular type of boy to a very definite industrial situation. His worries, anxieties, ideas of reference, feeling of inferiority, and finally his inability to carry on, were carefully studied and interpreted. His fear of going insane disappeared when he got a clear idea of what was taking place mentally. He grasped the fact that a twisted, distorted point of view on life, as well as disease, affects conduct.

This particular problem represents the difficulty that arises when an individual is called upon to make a new adjustment to life for which he is not adequately prepared. This does not imply that this type of individual is not capable of making such changes, but only that while these adjustments are in the process of making he needs kindly consideration and encouragement in order that his confidence and self-assurance may not give way and let him down completely.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

It was important for this lad to get to thinking of life in terms of the future and to get a better insight into his own abilities, and to appreciate to what extent his personality and character could contribute towards his success. He was obviously headed toward failure, not because of his inability to do the work, but because of the fact that he was emotionally perturbed over a variety of problems which actually he never had to meet. With an adequate rest and a better understanding of his own personality make-up he returned to his work, and when last heard from, was carrying on successfully and happily.

The foregoing cases are all common examples of a limited number of "mental breakdowns," misfits, and failures in industry. Most of these cases at the beginning are acute. The individual is withdrawn, he gets temporary relief, or the environment is modified, but too little consideration is given to the necessity of making a real effort to find that particular task for which he is best suited both intellectually and emotionally. There are those who need more careful consideration if they are to carry on even with a fair degree of happiness and efficiency, while others seem to have the facility for fitting with a fair degree of success into any industrial niche.

There are very definite limits as to how far vocational guidance can be carried by industry itself, notwithstanding the fact that it is economically sound and helps pay dividends to secure for each and every position the particular individual that is best equipped to do that particular task. Yet the process of selecting those qualified individuals is still one that is difficult, expensive and experimental.



## Problems of the Special Environment

There is, however, every reason to believe that our schools and colleges have much to offer that will be helpful in orienting the prospective employee as to varied vocations which are available to one of his particular intellectual and emotional make-up. This in itself would do much to direct the attention of young people, both boys and girls, to the fact that selecting a vocation is an important task and worthy of most careful and serious consideration by all concerned.

## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATION

THE responsibility of educating children is one that every parent has to meet, and although it can only be carried out with the maximum benefit to the child when it is planned to meet the particular needs of the individual, in comparatively few cases is this precaution duly observed. Yet for generations children have been run through the educational mill succeeding or failing, as the case may be, entirely dependent upon a haphazard, unsystematic plan which in most cases takes little consideration of the nature and personality of the individual who is being taught.

Those unsuited intellectually to profit by higher education have been pushed and prodded in our colleges. Many, who by virtue of superior intellectual endowments would have benefited economically, socially and culturally, have been prevented for some reason or other from taking advantage of advanced education. It is therefore not surprising that it has been difficult to evaluate just what contribution a college education adds to the sum total of the individual's efficiency and happiness.

The needs of those whose intellectual equipment is inferior have been recognized and special classes and trade schools have done much to develop them to the highest level compatible with their handicap. But those with special abilities and those with superior intellectual en-

## Education

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dowments have all too frequently been passed by unnoticed.

Educators have not been blind to the defects of the system under which they operate. They were among the first to attempt modifications with a view to fitting education to the individual.

At the Child Health Conference held in Washington, D. C., 1930, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur stated, "The schools to-day typify the orderly effort to train and *develop* youth for achievement and satisfactions in life; to secure opportunity for each person to go as far as his nature, mental equipment, physical vigor, and disciplined character make possible." There is grave reason to doubt that this is actually being accomplished, yet the fact that this ideal is recognized as the goal in the field of education is of great significance.

Specialization ordinarily does not begin until the student reaches the secondary schools. In the public high schools he will find definite courses from which he may choose a scientific, classical, or fine arts course, or a generally comprehensive program of study, or a course of training in commercial subjects, household arts, agriculture, and such other training as is dispensed under the guise of education. In most of the first class private secondary schools there is no selection of courses. These schools have one and only one function, namely that of preparing students for the task of passing College Board examinations. In these schools there is no place for the child whose intellectual endowment is not of the type which will permit him to achieve success in College Board examinations. The student who fails or shows evidence that he is likely to fail in this task of acquiring informa-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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tion for that specific task is not a desirable student. There is little inclination on the part of the headmaster, and rarely on the part of the teachers, to train and develop him to the extent to which his intellectual ability permits. "The orderly effort" of which Dr. Wilbur speaks is toward getting that particular boy removed from the school where he will no longer be a source of annoyance to his teachers. This is not intended as a scathing indictment of our secondary schools, but merely as a statement of the situation as it exists at the moment, and which, under the present system of education, must necessarily be so. There are, however, opportunities for broadening our conception of education so that it may include the large body of the intelligent as well as the limited group of intellectuals.

A most valuable contribution to the subject of "The unintellectual boy," because of its pertinence just at this time when the whole field of education is under discussion, and also because of the practical suggestions of a constructive nature, was made by Frederick Winsor, headmaster of the Middlesex School. He states, "There are signs that the colleges of the United States are beginning to insist on their right, as educational institutions, to demand intellectual activity from their students, a demand which certainly does not seem illogical or unreasonable."<sup>1</sup>

After discussing the responsibility which the college has in discharging its obligations to those who have endowed these institutions, and the gradual change that has taken

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Winsor, "The Unintellectual Boy," *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1931, pp. 487-96.

## Education

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place in the attitude of the employer toward the college man during the past fifty years, pointing out that the war did much to overcome the old-time prejudice towards institutions of higher learning—he goes on to say, “The new faith, however, is just as unreasoning as the old prejudice, and therefore just as blind. To people in general, what is an advantage to one man must be an advantage to every man, and so, to-day, it is almost an article of educational faith to say that every man should go to college, and therefore that the colleges should provide types of education suited to every man. So positive is this faith that it has brought an irresistible pressure on the great universities, which have been forced by it, first, to accept human material utterly unfitted to be intellectually trained, and then to provide training for this material such as it could accept.”<sup>2</sup>

It may be said that Mr. Winsor represents the aristocracy of the educational group, yet facts are facts and there is no way of evading the issue he has presented. The large number of failures during the first year in college, and the subsequent failures which follow as the student advances in his college course, bears witness to the fact that college material is not, after all, the very highly selected group which we are inclined to believe it to be. And as Mr. Winsor's contribution makes clear, there is little value to the student, college or parent in forcing the so-called unintellectual youth into a position in life where failure is inevitable.

Let us turn for a moment to one who represents what may be called “the democracy of education,” Joy Elmer

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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Morgan, editor of the *Journal of the National Education Association*. He graphically portrays "Bill," who represents one of the hundreds who are excluded from college during the freshman year on account of poor scholarship; "Bill" is disconsolate, depressed, broken in spirit, arriving home to the family who have struggled hard to send him to college. The sorrow, disappointment and humiliation are vividly portrayed, and he goes on to say, "This doesn't sound like education, does it? It doesn't measure up to the true definition of education as guided growth. It doesn't quite fit our boasted ideal of a fair start in life for all. Great teachers have always been awakeners, stirrers up of human souls, finders of talents. But here are youths—thousands of them—turned back with talents neither found nor trained in an age that relentlessly calls for training." In his closing paragraph on the subject Mr. Morgan presents "The Democratic View," as follows:

America is mainly democratic in its ideals. Its very settlement was a protest against efforts to crush human aspiration. It is familiar with the point of view of those who would deny the tools of learning to the masses. It has heard citizens cry out against the extension of the common school to the children of all the people. It has heard a later generation of false prophets cry out against widened high school opportunity. But gradually opportunities have been widened and our young people have risen to meet the new challenge. How many of us would be where we are today were it not for these widened opportunities? A democratic view insists that even the stupid and wayward grow, that their growth can be guided to the advantage of themselves and society, and that it is reasonable to expect schools to change their curriculums and to perfect their teaching as new problems arise.

## Education

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The gulf of differences that exists between the leaders of the aristocracy and the leaders of the democracy in education is of such a nature that it really represents an *impasse*. One group holds that colleges are temples of learning into which only those with the highest intellectual qualifications should be permitted to enter; the other, represents the college as an institution of the public which should meet the needs of all,—an institution which should fulfill its obligations to mankind by making the intellectual more intellectual and the stupid less stupid.

Educators in both groups are deeply concerned with the solution of the problem of providing educational advantages to all those who may profit by their efforts. Mr. Winsor, for example, feels very strongly that the secondary schools have much to contribute. "If our secondary schools could be brought to anything like a satisfactory standard of aim and achievement, an immediate improvement of the whole national life, social, political, economic, and æsthetic, would result. My contention is that the new attitude on the part of the public toward college education, and the abandonment of the idea that preparation for college should be the educational end and aim of all secondary school training, will free the schools from the most serious handicap from which they have suffered, and will increase enormously their chances of performing their real function of education. Up to the present moment every secondary school has been the slave of college entrance requirements. Its first and necessary business is to see to it that the school course of each boy meets the specific requirements for admission to the college of his choice, and any consideration of real edu-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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cational values can have no weight whatever as against that necessity."

There are those who are convinced that our State universities have a function in providing educational opportunities which will allow the unintellectual, or perhaps the less intellectual, boy or girl to pursue higher education. Such an education would represent an attempt to attain breadth rather than to reach intellectual peaks. There is no doubt that the existing opportunities for such an education fill a real need in the lives of hundreds of students who would otherwise be thrown out into the industrial world at a rather immature age to compete in the open labor market under conditions which are already overcrowded. The pursuit of such an education pays dividends in many ways. Earning ability is invariably increased. A background which is at least colored by cultural and social contacts is provided, adding much to the future happiness of the individual. Yet one must keep in mind that these opportunities are only open for those who are intellectually qualified to take advantage of them.

Those who have but ordinary intellectual endowments but special talents and aptitudes, whether in music, art, writing, or some mechanical ability—also require training, and in order that they might reach a high degree of skill and special technique they should be able to find opportunities in school for the development of their special talents.

There exist at the present time facilities which if properly utilized would materially reduce the number of misfits now attempting to carry on under orthodox educational systems with nothing but failure awaiting them. There



## Education

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are secondary schools which have developed sufficient independence and courage to break away from the traditional demands of parents and college authorities to run all students through the intellectual mill, grooming them for college examinations regardless of their intellectual fitness, interest or effort.

So far as the parents are concerned, they must accept educational conditions as they exist at present. This means that they must necessarily use their best judgment in fitting the available opportunities for an education to the child in which they happen to be interested. Rarely does one ever hear of parents going to, and even making a casual survey, of the college which their child plans to enter. They are not particularly interested in the physical lay-out.

The public schools must, of necessity, provide the educational opportunities of the great majority of the adolescents in this country, and so far as the selection of the school is concerned there is but little that is left to parents. Usually there will be but one high school in the larger towns and villages and even in our cities the selection is very largely made with reference to the course to be pursued. Such names as "The Mechanic Arts High School," "High School of Commerce," "Latin High School," and "Classified High," designate the stress that is laid on particular subjects.

Parents can interest themselves, however, in the school and the scholastic standards which it maintains. They can make it their business to know intimately one or more of the teachers who are instructing their children and through contact with the school have first-hand information as to how their child is fitting into the school

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

régime. Parents should be informed as to the social contacts the child is making—who his friends are, how he spends his leisure time, how much is expected of him in the way of studying outside school hours, and what the student's attitude is toward those who are directing his activities both in the classroom, on the athletic field, and elsewhere. All too frequently we find that grievances and grudges spring up in the mind of the student against teachers which might be easily ironed out if only recognized early. These emotional upsets interfere with application to school work. Teacher and parent must look upon the job of educating and training the student as a coöperative effort. The child's time is so divided between home and school that unless both forces are working together with the same goal in mind much time and effort will be wasted and in the end the result will not be satisfactory to any of those concerned.

Parents all too frequently feel the necessity of defending failure on the part of their children by criticizing the school without taking time to investigate and find out where the real difficulty lies. Teachers can only be fair and just to the individual student when they have some knowledge of what the student's parents are like and what some of his home problems may be. Nothing but harm is done to the child when the parents enter into controversy with the school. The system under which the child is educated needs the active and moral support of the parents so long as it is deemed wise to use it.

The day school used to be looked upon as a compromise between the high school and boarding school but with more recent developments and a broader vision of education it has assumed a very important and much needed

## Education

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place in the educational field. An effort is being made by the leaders in this field to supplement the old routine of day-school life, which was limited to scholastic pursuits, organized sports and recreational hours. The day schools are beginning to utilize for educational purposes the resources of the community in which the school is located. The more enterprising of these schools bring their students in contact with the best in music and in art, and museums of various types are visited and used to supplement their studies in natural history and the sciences. Opportunities are available for bringing the students in contact with important personages of the day through attendance at public lectures, and in a general way the richness of the adolescent's environment can frequently be maintained or increased by use of the day school.

Important as it may be to make sure that our children have the best in our public schools, in respect to academic standards, moral atmosphere, and instructors who understand the material with which they are dealing, it is even more important to exercise care in the selection of a boarding school; for while he is there the child's entire life is under the direct and constant influence of the school. There is no escape from the school to some other environment when the day's work is done. At all times, whether it be at work or at play, in the dining-room or on the athletic field, in the chapel, infirmary, study hall, or bathroom, the individual is surrounded by other students and by masters. The intimacy of such a life cannot but affect the individual either for better or worse. The selection of the boarding school, since it is to exert such an influence on the early adolescent, therefore requires even

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

more care than the selection of the college which the student will enter when he is more mature and from which he at least has some chance of escape should the intimacy of life become intolerable.

One must keep in mind that neither boys nor schools are standardized. At fourteen one lad is filled with confidence, courage, and self-assurance, and fits into the drawing-room as well as he does on the football field; he is determined and has no doubts or indecisions as to what he is seeking in life; he is mature in all that the word implies. Another boy, a year older, perhaps a brother, is shy, diffident, lacking in confidence, fearful lest he make the wrong move; he avoids people though he may crave companionship; he is easily hurt, humiliated and embarrassed. Both of these boys may be good students and physically sound; yet it is not unlikely that the school which would do well for the first boy would result in failure for the second.

School A, for example, has a national reputation. All of its students will eventually go to one or other of the outstanding men's colleges. The students, for the most part, all come from the "best families" of the country—a very high percentage from three of our largest cities. As a group, these are all fine young men, with good manners and high moral standards. By virtue of the wealth and social position back of them they are self-assured, and naturally make up a very select group from which those on the outside are likely to be excluded. Athletic ability, scholastic attainment and special abilities in debating or dramatics may or may not receive the recognition to which they are entitled by the student body in this particular school. The dividing line is invariably on social

## Education

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position and intimate family connection, and a rather vague, intangible barrier is set up to the outsider.

One would hardly think of sending the shy, diffident lad to this particular school if one considered the matter, but all too frequently the boy has been registered at the school of parental choice by the time he is three years old. His father and grandfather went there, and most of his father's friends are sending their children there or to a rival school which has traditions much the same, and the same type of student. It is simply the thing to be done and the idea of making a change or even considering a change never occurs until the lad finds himself in trouble or the headmaster writes home about his failure in academic work.

The selection of a school or college should be undertaken with the idea that there is no more important step in the entire career of the adolescent, who is leaving home usually on the pretext of educational advantages, than that of placing him in a school that is compatible with his temperament and disposition, and one that will do most in supplying his individual needs.

One wouldn't buy a barn for the housing of cattle without investigating the prospective purchase, but invariably parents make arrangements to house their children under conditions they have not seen and with personalities whose aims and ideals are unknown to them.

The attitude that a boy is a boy, a college is a college, or a school a school and therefore what is the sense of fussing about it, seems characteristic of many parents who in other respects use excellent judgment in their affairs. To know a school or college one should make a personal investigation. An attempt should be made to find out

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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something about the faculty. Is there a fairly good sprinkling of young masters and professors? Is there evidence of progress? How do the alumni of the past ten years compare with those of thirty years ago? Where do the boys come from who go to the school? Are they all from Boston or New York or is there evidence that the school is more cosmopolitan? Where do the graduates go to college? What is the attitude of the school toward the boy who is not college material? What is the plan for their athletic activities? Do 10 to 15 per cent participate in sports while the rest look on, or have the authorities devised ways and means to interest the school in games as a means of pleasant recreation, healthy exercise and social contact, and not as an end in itself?

It is not sufficient to pick a good school and entertain the idea that it is suited to any boy. Neither is it wise to entertain the idea that a "good boy" will fit into any school. The fact that a school or college was particularly well-suited to John's father, or even his older brother, gives no assurance that that school should be selected for John. Any school that fails for a generation to make some very definite changes in its mode of operating is in the process of disintegration, and these changes may or may not work out to the advantage of the prospective candidate.

It is well to keep in mind, too, that the adolescent and not his parent is going to live in the school, or college, and that he should therefore have some share in the selection. A visit to the school with opportunities to talk with the headmaster, to see the school during recreation and study hours, and to mingle for a while with the students in order

## Education

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to get the atmosphere of the school, is the best way in which to make possible a wise choice.

There is no question in the minds of educators and others interested in the welfare of the adolescent but that every normal boy and girl should have the equivalent of a complete high school course, even though the curriculum has to be somewhat modified to fit the quality of his particular intellectual endowment. By the end of the second year in high school it can be determined with a fair degree of accuracy whether or not a particular student would be wise in preparing to go on to college, and if not, it should be possible at that time to make such changes in his course as would stress preparation for life rather than for the passing of college entrance examinations. It has already been pointed out that comparatively few of the outstanding secondary schools are concerned with the intelligent boy who is not college bound. This means that parents must seek schools which, although less well known, have headmasters with vision and trustees and alumni who are not dominated by tradition.

Such schools are springing up throughout the country and in many instances the dominating spirit is some educator who has dissented from the orthodox plan of education. These men with ideas and ideals about education and particularly about the student himself, are not always found in the so-called temples of learning. Some of them are occupying positions which are relatively obscure but no less important, simply because they are thus permitted to do the thing they most love—actually teaching boys and girls to live up to the full extent of their inherent abilities.

The question of who should go to college has also been

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

answered decisively by leaders in the field of education. We found in our cursory discussion earlier in this chapter that outstanding leaders in education entertained such differences of opinion that one could hardly feel that they were discussing the same subject. One group apparently feels that it is the function of the individual to serve education, to strive for its advancement, and to struggle that it may reach higher peaks and consequently be pushed farther and farther away from the common herd. The other believes that education is but a tool which can be utilized to sharpen the intellects of the masses, that it should be applied to one and all alike, and that figuratively speaking, it is quite as important to raise the intellectual level of a hundred students 10 per cent as it is to raise the intellectual level of twenty-five students 40 per cent.

What do parents think about all this and what have our colleges given them reason to expect from these temples of learning?

It appears to be quite conclusive from various studies that education has an economic value which may be measured in the increased rapidity with which the college man reaches positions of responsibility and consequent higher compensation. Recently it has been presented in a way indicating that every hour spent in college paid at the rate of about \$6.00 per hour on the total life earnings. Increased earning capacity cannot be ignored as a motive on the part of the great masses who want their children to have a college education. Regardless of what one's attitude may be concerning the relationships between earning power and achievement, few will deny that it is one of the most important tools we have at our command



## Education

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in bringing to those who are dependent upon us the things worth while in life—education, culture, art, music, amusement, travel, besides the sense of security that comes with complete economic independence and the comfort and satisfaction that come of being able to provide adequate care and relief in times of sickness and other misfortune.

Regardless of whether they have had the advantages or disadvantages of a college education, parents generally recognize that the college experience has a social value and that the college girl or boy starts out in life with an indefinable stamp which opens the doors to many opportunities that would otherwise be closed; and parents are not unmindful that the social contacts made in college may contribute much to ultimate business or professional success.

And then parents who have profited from their own educational opportunities appreciate the intellectual satisfaction which college opened up for them, and which they want their children to enjoy. These are all good, legitimate reasons why parents in general want their children to go to college.

There are, of course, a host of motives that are less worthy of consideration. A business man may want a place to park his son until the latter is old enough to come into the firm. A society woman may think her daughter will be as safe and comfortable in college as elsewhere until she becomes engaged or marries. Another mother may want to break up an undesirable love affair. Parents may find it expedient to substitute a period in college for a trip of "finishing" abroad. A father who was a successful college athlete may wish his promising

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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son to follow in his footsteps, without having any interest or insight into what a particular college will be able to do for his son.

Whatever the reason for sending the boy or girl to college, or the advantages to be derived from this experience, it is well to keep in mind that the desires and ambitions of parents not infrequently bring pressure to bear on both the student and the college to enter those whose intellectual inferiority or inadequate preparation render them unfit to benefit from a college education. In such cases, failure being inevitable, the student may seek escape from his inefficiency and consequent unhappiness through illness, indifference, asocial conduct, or simply a life of idleness and distraction. As a matter of fact, many such students make no pretense of interest in any of the courses they carry as majors in college. They have no desire, much less thirst, to delve into the abstract subjects which are presented in the curriculum and it takes but little persuasion to direct their interests toward other fields of endeavor where they can successfully compete with their fellows. This is a matter that should be given more consideration by the heads of our secondary schools, and they should find an opportunity to get the facts of the situation over to both the student and parents.

The importance of the foregoing discussion to parents can be translated in terms of practical value if they but make a survey of the children of their friends, neighbors and acquaintances who have gone to college, and see the surprisingly large number who have failed to graduate for some reason or other. Even after eliminating those who obviously should not have gone on account of their intel-

## Education

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lectual inadequacy for this particular task, and those who have dropped out because of illness or lack of money, there still remains a large number whose failure can only be attributed to the failure of the college to do its part in keeping alive the fires of interest, enthusiasm, and intellectual curiosity with which these students entered their institution of learning. Not infrequently this latter group includes students who theoretically would constitute the very best "college material."

Therefore, the necessity of giving careful consideration to the selection of a college where the student is most likely to get that which his particular personality needs most, and the one which gives the greatest promise of fitting him for the important job of living among men and meeting life in the most adequate way, seems obvious.

In the selection of a college one must keep in mind that to many adolescents, especially those who are leaving home for the first time, the college environment is highly complex. It requires innumerable adjustments. In our large universities, the population is extremely cosmopolitan; social, economic, cultural and religious backgrounds differ; conservatives are brought suddenly and unexpectedly up against radicals; the pious mingle with the agnostics, the rich with the poor and the cultured with the uncultured. For one individual a particular college where all these social situations are exaggerated to the extreme may be selected with impunity, while for another such an environment should be avoided.

Many of our city-bred youths would profit by going to a small college in the country instead of to the large metropolitan universities. Young people with limited experience gain much in a university where they may have

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

contact with students from various sections of the country, and various parts of the world. Some colleges allot to each state or section a certain number of places in each freshman class. Other students will find themselves only in the college presenting unusual opportunities—as, for example Antioch College in Ohio, or Rollins College in Florida—and would be lost in the larger orthodox institutions of learning.

Parents who are desirous of fitting the present educational facilities to their particular child with the greatest amount of wisdom may well find many other factors requiring their consideration, but the all-important point to keep in mind is this: there is undoubtedly a school and a college that will best meet the needs of your child and it is your responsibility to help him find it and, when you have found it, to help him use it. Regardless of your preconceived ideas and your own personal desires and ambitions, your first consideration in this matter should be the welfare of your child.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCERNING PARENTS

**I**N the course of these chapters so many parental attitudes have been criticized and so many parent-child relationships pointed out as unwholesome or undesirable that, on reaching this point, the reader may well be asking, "But what is the ideal parent-child relationship?"

For centuries this question has been answered in terms of respect and obedience from the child for the parent. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" was the advice to the Hebrew child; and the ancient Mexican said to his son, "Honor all persons, particularly thy parents to whom thou owest obedience, respect, and service."<sup>1</sup> Nor did honor and obedience cease with maturity or marriage. The respect due one's elders, and the care of one's aged parents have been among the most important traditions of both Oriental and Occidental peoples.

But in civilizations in which children followed directly in the footsteps of their parents, generation after generation, obedience and respect were natural. The boy who grew up in admiration of his father's skill as a hunter, a fisherman, or a warrior, or in awe of his wisdom as a priest or tribal chief, found it natural to obey and

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<sup>1</sup> Oscar Chrisman, *The Historical Child*, p. 20.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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respect the parent who could teach him these things and who, by virtue of his greater experience, would continue to excel in skill and surpass him in wisdom even after the first instruction was over. Similarly, the girl found it natural to obey and respect the parent who could teach her all there was for a woman to know of domestic life, of childbearing and of caring for the various possible needs of her family.

But children ceased long ago to follow in the footsteps of their parents and to acquire their knowledge of living directly from father, mother, or other close relative or tribal kinsman. More complex forms of civilization have brought many changes influencing this custom: increased variety, and therefore greater possibility of choice, among trades and vocations; the apprenticeship system whereby children were bound out to complete strangers to learn a way of earning their living; urbanization and the tendency of youth to leave the farm or rural village for the metropolis; formal systems of education whereby children not only received learning from people other than their parents, but often received learning of which their parents were ignorant, or which was counter to all their traditional belief; discoveries and inventions so revolutionary that one generation can scarcely comprehend the existence of preceding generations without these advantages; and better facilities for travel to all parts of the world.

Such factors have made the child not only less dependent on his parent for his knowledge of life, but often superior to his parent in his knowledge of specific things. They are, moreover, factors that have led the child to divide among the various people from whom he does

## Concerning Parents

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obtain this knowledge, the obedience and respect which in former days would all have been due his parents.

"To add to the confusion," as Dr. Van Waters has well said, "the dress, habits, activities, and mood of youth are copied by adults so that the value of youth appears to have an exaggerated significance in social life. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Parents can scarcely expect that their children respect in them what they recognize as an unbecoming imitation of their own pattern of existence.

The parent who continues on the assumption that love, honor, respect, and obedience are his due, and are inherent in the parent-child relationship, can expect but little sympathy when his children have grown old enough to destroy this illusion for him. Parents must be wise enough to accept the fact that their young boy and girl may respect a mathematics teacher for her greater knowledge of geometry, a science teacher for his greater knowledge of geology, a local champion for his greater skill in tennis or golf, a neighbor for his greater reputation as a trial lawyer or surgeon, a family acquaintance for her superior taste in clothes, while, at the same time, these children may have a most sincere and appreciative respect of what their parents have accomplished with the resources and opportunities available to them, and of what they have contributed to the welfare, enrichment, and happiness of each other's lives and the lives of all those with whom they have come in contact.

Human beings do not love each other because of such specific accomplishments as have just been enumerated, even though any of these may be the common interest

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<sup>2</sup> See "Adolescence" in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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that attracts them to each other or the bond that holds them together. Nor do they love each other merely because of the ties of blood or marriage that exist between them unless they themselves have made of such a relationship something valid and beautiful. So a child does not love his parent for some skill or knowledge nor cease to love him when he discovers that his parents are surpassed by other people in these things. A child's love for his parents is based on his feeling that his parents, above every one else, care for his needs, sympathize with him in his troubles, rejoice in his achievements, take a genuine interest in his pursuits, and understand him not only in the ways in which he resembles them, but also in the ways in which he differs from them. A very real part of the child's emotion may be love of his mother's voice, or his father's gestures, their eyes, their hair, their little tricks of speech and other individual traits that may be charming in themselves or dear only because of association. These things are, however, a part of any personal affection, and not peculiar to the love of children for their parents.

The love of the parent for the child differs from this, chiefly in that the parent is conscious of the child's dependence on him. But this does not place upon him the sole responsibility for creating a happy relationship between them.

During the early years of childhood parents must, of necessity, assume the responsibility for this relationship, giving the child the benefit of their education and training as well as of their experience and general maturity. It is essential for them to direct this relationship by forces that are intellectual rather than emotional.



## Concerning Parents

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Just what happens when a parent fails to guide his emotional reactions by his intellect has already been amply illustrated, particularly in those cases in which the parent was described as constantly pointing out and keeping the weakness forever in the foreground instead of introducing constructive methods to overcome the difficulty, or occasionally stressing the child's virtues. By exaggerating the importance of perfection beyond all reasonable limits parents give the child a discouraged and hopeless feeling of inferiority. This attitude is the more unfortunate when the defect is of the type which cannot be controlled without self-confidence, as for instance timidity, shyness, stammering, and clumsiness.

It is natural for parents to desire not only normality but superiority in their children, and to compare their offspring not only with a cherished ideal, but with the children of their neighbors, relatives, and friends. In one of his shorter pieces Thomas Mann describes a father watching a party of young people in his home and says of him, ". . . like all fathers he compared the gifts of strange young men with those of his own son, experiencing various degrees of disquiet, envy, and shame in the process." He pictures this father as listening with envy to one of the guests singing folk songs, and then saying to himself, "Now, there is my poor Bert, who knows nothing and can do nothing, and thinks only of playing the clown, though he hasn't the talent even for that." Although the father felt pessimistic over this comparison, "he strove to be just, and attempted to assure himself that Bert, after all, was a fine boy, perhaps with more basic qualities than this successful Möller."<sup>3</sup> The parent

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Mann, *Children and Fools*, pp. 45-6.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

must, however, do more than "strive to be just"; he must conceal the fact that he is striving.

Another common way in which parents misdirect their emotional response to a child is by leading him to build his life around his illnesses and defects. The effect of this form of over-solicitude has already been illustrated. (See the case of Everett, p. 33.)

Often parents make this same mistake in their own lives, building their lives around their illnesses, failures, and sorrows. This is not uncommon in families in which one child is physically or mentally defective, or in which some member of the family has died; in their grief over a lost child, or their anxiety over a sick or abnormal child, they neglect the healthy and normal children who really need their attention and who could really derive greater benefit from it. Children often show strong reactions to such neglect. (See the case of Coleman, p. 243.)

It would be unreasonable to ask that parents forget the children they have lost by death, or neglect those who are constitutionally inferior, but it is not unreasonable to expect them to be fair to the remaining members of their family. Most parents do not make these mistakes intentionally. But because emotions are likely to exert a more powerful influence than judgment in such a situation, they often need help in getting the whole family picture properly focused.

One cannot expect that all the children will necessarily hold the same place in the parent's affections, but it is not too much to expect that they be fair in their relation to all of them, freeing themselves of their prejudices, and displaying a good, sporting attitude toward the child who pleases them least. Often enough the displeasing child

## Concerning Parents

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is the one in whom the parent sees many of his own faults. Such a discovery should be frankly admitted by the parent to himself, and instead of betraying his irritation, he should help the child to see how these faults work out to the individual's disadvantage.

It is important, if we are to unravel some of the involved emotional situations existing between parents and children, to keep in mind that adult attitudes toward life are not static. The prospective mother at twenty may be very resentful at the thought of having to assume the responsibility of motherhood before she has really finished her honeymoon, while at twenty-five she may be eagerly anticipating a companion for her only son now five years of age. Motherhood at thirty-five may be accepted with great reluctance or even a marked pathological depression by the woman whose family has already outgrown the budget and who can see no prospect of doing reasonably well by the children to whom she is already obligated. On the other hand, the long desired child coming during the fourth decade may be looked upon as a gift from the gods.

Parental attitudes are also affected materially toward the newcomer in the family by exterior situations and conditions over which the individual has little control—as, for example, a war or a period of economic depression.

These considerations cannot be overlooked in our effort to understand why parents vary so in their attachments to their various children. Some of these emotional reactions are conditioned by circumstances long before the arrival of the child. They are invariably denied, or, if admitted, explained on the basis of some undesirable character traits in the child. Antagonisms and over-so-

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

licitude on the part of the parent always call for careful investigation.

The responsibility for the parent-child relationship does not always remain with the parent. As the child grows, he, too, must contribute toward the stability, satisfactions and happiness of his life with his parents. Essentially, the relationship between parent and child should be maintained by a *mutual effort* to acquire a better understanding of each other's personality, each other's interests, problems, and pleasures—both parent and child endeavoring on the one hand to appreciate the various factors contributing to their respective health, efficiency, and happiness, and, on the other hand, to gain a clearer conception of the influences leading to dissatisfaction, failure, and defeat.

Although society has assumed many responsibilities for the purpose of safeguarding the physical and moral welfare of the child, and organizations too numerous to mention exist solely for the purpose of protecting children against cruelty, exploitation, injustice, vicious practices, improper physical and mental hygiene, indifference, and neglect, little can be done—either by social legislation or by any organization—to improve the emotional relationship between parent and child.

Parents cannot expect children to become interested in them and in their activities unless they themselves take the time and have the patience to give the child intelligent insight into what they are doing and just how their busy, active life is, after all, built around the welfare of the family group. It can be made quite obvious to a child by the age of eight or ten how comforts, amusements, and recreations of the family and himself are dependent, to

## Concerning Parents

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a large extent, on the health and efficiency of his parents.

It is not difficult for the child to grasp the idea that the business of earning money by the father, and spending it wisely by the mother, is a real job. He can be made to understand that regardless of how interested the father may be in the varied activities of the child there is but a limited amount of time he can devote to these pastimes, and that, generous as he would like to be, the family budget limits the amount of money he can put into the frivolities of youth.

The mere fact that a mother's life has become so highly systematized that every event must be scheduled does not necessarily make it a "rich" one. Breakfast at 7:00 A.M.; ordering at 7:45; household management to 10:30; changing clothes and then shopping until 12:30; luncheon engagement at 1:00; club meeting at 2:30 P.M.; committee meeting at 4:00, and so on, is not necessarily an attractive or impressive program to an adolescent, who realizes that any interruption with this schedule raises havoc in the household. Everything is carefully provided for except a little leisure. When such mothers say their lives are "filled to overflowing" they are quite right. In spite of system, their plans invariably spill over and interfere with those of the other members of the household, but they go on attempting to excuse a hectic, erratic, selfish, tiresome existence under the guise of system, and characterize it as being a life "rich and overflowing." It is not surprising that children growing up with a consciousness of the futility of such an existence, react with indifference, failing not only to find significance in the relationship with the parent, but also to put value on the real things in life.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

There will always be limits—inherent limits of interest and sympathy—beyond which it would be useless to attempt to carry the child. The artistically inclined daughter may never become an avid admirer of a mother with political ambitions; the boy with keen mechanical interests may never become enthusiastic over a father whose chief delight is rural gardening and puttering around with a hoe and rake; but an appreciative respect for the interests of the parent as an individual will not only make for happier home relationships but will help the growing boy and girl fit into the larger community life with less friction and more satisfaction.

Just as the parent-child relationship is strengthened when the child is enabled to take an appreciative interest in the activities of the parent, so this relationship may be enriched when the child is given an opportunity to understand some of the problems of the parent. Needless to say, a parent should not pour out to the child troubles which he is too immature to understand, merely for the satisfaction to be derived from arousing the child's sympathy, and working on his emotions and affections. Long and heart-rending accounts of domestic difficulties written to the son or daughter in boarding school or college may serve for a time to keep a child in a state of anxious solicitude over the parent, but eventually the normal and healthy reaction will be one of resentment and loss of respect for the parent.

One of the curious situations arising between parent and child, and one that causes much embarrassment to the child and pain to the parent, is brought about by an intense but belated desire on the part of the parent to get what he calls "close to the child." Parents oftentimes

## Concerning Parents

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become almost obsessed with the idea that they must have the confidence of their child, that it is essential for the welfare of the child that they know every thought and desire he may have, and that their one mission in life is to know their child so well that they may, by virtue of their own experiences, safeguard their offspring from all danger.

Interestingly enough, this reaction is as likely to come from fathers as from mothers, particularly from the father who has been more or less indifferent to the needs of the emotional life of his child during the growing-up period. Often it is the business or professional man who has left much of what could be called other than custodial care to the mother, to schools and camps, recreational and religious groups, and so on. He suddenly begins to entertain feelings of guilt that he has overlooked his duty, and as with most efforts at compensation, he at once overdoes, in his desire to make up for past neglect. His sudden, unexplained and baffling attempt to become intimate, familiar, friendly, and oftentimes affectionate, is a little bit beyond the understanding of the child who has grown accustomed to an attitude of indifference and boredom. He is likely to find it not only quite disconcerting but also unwelcome inasmuch as he has by this time built up other resources into which he pours confidences. He has never had reason to believe from his experiences with his parents that his hopes, ambitions, daydreams, sorrows and disappointments, were a matter of concern to them. He has always been impressed with the importance of manners and morals as the real issue, and perhaps the only things that really counted in the scheme of adults; these were, of course, vital factors to them—the ones

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

that caused worry and anxiety, or perhaps humiliation by casting indirectly some reflection on their own ability as parents. In the days when it really mattered no one had seemed interested in what he was thinking, or how he felt about life and all its perplexing problems. So it is not surprising that he is overwhelmed by this newly awakened parental concern about his welfare, or that he may find it rather trying.

After talking with many of these apparently indifferent boys and girls, who are well advanced in their teens, and then discussing the situation with their parents, one becomes more and more impressed with the necessity of parents getting acquainted with their children at an early date.

To quote from a previous discussion of this problem:<sup>4</sup>

It is safe to say that the father who fails to establish an interest between himself and his child, to get the spirit of companionship, to make himself felt as a necessity in the child's life during the first decade, will probably never do so. At best the interest will come as a sense of duty, an expedient, but not from the mere joy of it. Children are quick to recognize the difference between fun for the sake of fun, from which the parent and child get real satisfaction, and the indifferent efforts made by adults to carry out a task as a duty that bores them. Such an association not only bores the parent but also the child.

How many fathers there are who never have experienced the real joy of companionship with their children! They have unbounded pride in ownership. They toil incessantly to provide their children with food, clothing, comfortable quarters, to send them to private schools and summer camps, to provide

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas A. Thom, *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*, pp. 47-48.



## Concerning Parents

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the means for lessons in music and dancing, thinking perhaps all the time that some day when the child gets a little older, they will take time to get acquainted. The child grows older, and as he grows older his personality develops, he takes on new habits and traits, his thoughts and feelings become crystallized into ideas. These ideas are permanent possessions, and among them are ideas concerning his parents. Father symbolizes everything that is good. Mother sings his praises and tells Johnny how hard he works to give them all the nice things they enjoy. He is told that his father is brave and honest and kindly, and on the whole his general impression is favorable. It is often, however, a rather vague, ill-defined idea to which there is attached but little emotion—something like his idea about the church or Santa Claus.

The pathetic part of this situation is that the joy of companionship is so much more lasting, so much more satisfying, than the job of ownership. It is given to many to own children, but to comparatively few to know and understand them and to be companions to them.

Parents must not delude themselves: Regardless of whether their children find them interesting or boring, companionable, or indifferent, just or unjust, sooner or later they will and should leave home. While the child's necessity for emancipating himself from his parents has been receiving much emphasis, comparatively little has been said about the mental and emotional state of the parent who may be left very much at loose ends by the process. Parents must prepare themselves, as well as their children, for this emancipation. Mothers particularly are likely to find themselves stranded somewhere along middle age, robbed of their principal occupation and chief interest—motherhood, and this may be just the time when the father has become completely absorbed in his business, or may be reaching the climax of

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

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his professional career, so that she feels the growing-up of her children even more keenly. She should prepare for this by developing the interests and hobbies for which she has never had time before, and because she may find it a little difficult to make this adjustment alone the father should anticipate this situation and help her to direct her need to "mother" into other channels.

Following is a description of a mother who was quite unprepared to have her family grow up.

*Mrs. S.* had been an extremely active, efficient and domineering individual. She had married at the age of twenty-two and had had three children. Her natural efficiency and her interest in her husband's large and rather engrossing business had led to her taking over much of the detail of management, and she did this work extremely well in addition to running her household and bringing up her children.

She continued in this active life until she was nearly fifty. Then, within a short period of time her two daughters were married and she retired from the business world so that she was left with only a small household to run, and her twenty-five-year-old son and her husband to manage. The thought of giving up all her responsibility became increasingly depressing to her; she persuaded one of her married daughters to come to see her almost every day and sometimes she would get her husband to stay home from work to keep her company. Meanwhile, much of the solicitude which she had formerly divided among the various members of the family and the business, she now concentrated on her son. She was constantly confronted with the depressing thought that he, too, would soon be getting married. She was filled with

## Concerning Parents

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anxiety over the fact that sooner or later this boy, too, would have outgrown his need of her.

An English physician writing of the needs of the adolescent girl makes the statement, "Parents must understand not only the real needs of the child, but their own needs, and be able to satisfy them in a more wholesome manner than at the child's expense,"<sup>5</sup> and this may well be applied to all parents, not merely those having adolescent daughters.

### ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER PARENTS

The situation when the child has been adopted is one in which proper adjustment of the child not infrequently presents special difficulties, and behavior problems of a particularly aggravated or stubborn nature are common. Especially is this so if the fact of adoption has not been satisfactorily explained to the child and he grows up with feelings of doubt, uncertainty, shame, resentment, or inferiority.

The young child is content if he finds security and affection in his relationship with his parents, but as he grows older and increasingly preoccupied with himself and questions of his "origin and destiny" he becomes more keenly aware of the nature of his personal relationships and more conscious of and sensitive to comparisons between his own situation and that of his friends.

Foster parents create for the child the same problems as do natural parents. There are, however, certain pit-

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<sup>5</sup> Gerald H. J. Pearson, "What the Adolescent Girl Needs in Her Home," *Mental Hygiene*, January, 1930, pp. 40-53.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

falls, even where circumstances and conditions are most satisfactory, that need to be guarded against. Invariably those who adopt children have wanted children of their own. They have waited long and patiently for a period of years, and, not infrequently, there is a strong emotional turmoil centered around their disappointment. Hesitatingly, haltingly, with doubts and misgivings, they seep through this process of adoption, hoping to find in this step a satisfactory means of sublimation. They start out with an over-solicitous attitude toward the child, having grave misgivings as to the stability of this new relationship. They are unmindful of the fact that we do not love our mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, and children because they are related to us, but because of their lovable qualities and our associations with them; and they may not realize that the love relationship is determined by what parents contribute in care, protection, comfort, and pleasure to the child and by what the child contributes to the parents' emotional needs.

An over-solicitous attitude on the part of the foster parents often leads to an over-dependent attitude on the part of the child, especially toward the mother, so that many of the problems found in adopted children are those which are associated with immaturity and dependency. Perhaps the most common problem is that of the child whose sense of security has been shaken by lack of frankness on the part of the foster parents.

It may well be that both foster parents and child have a particular problem to solve; but so has the family in which separation, death, or divorce has left a child with but one parent; and the family in which the child is unwanted by his own parents; and the family in which an

## Concerning Parents

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own child is greatly inferior to his parents; and there are many other situations presenting special problems for a child and his natural parents.

Following are a few examples of outstanding problems seen in adopted children, not created by the fact that these children were adopted, but rather by the attitudes of the adoptive parent.

*Maxine* was brought to the psychiatrist by her adoptive parents because she seemed to be finding it difficult to fit into the scheme of things without considerable rebellion.

This child was adopted against the advice of the adoptive father who was never fond of her and always irritated by her. He spent as little time as possible in her company, and he was always eager to have her boarded out.

As far back as the girl could remember, she appreciated that she was not wanted by her father. The adoptive mother was fond of the child, but found her a real problem and keenly regretted having taken her. She described *Maxine* as a domineering, forward, and loquacious youngster who always wanted to manage things. She also thought her extremely selfish and self-centered, cruel to animals, and not liked by other children because of her domineering ways. She thought that *Maxine* used every opportunity to annoy and upset the family, quarreling with the maids to the point of swearing at them and scratching and kicking them in her efforts to get her own way. She took things from stores, and was deceitful in various ways, lying in order to get out of trouble, or to obtain money. She had also threatened on several occasions to run away.

This picture of an adopted child is not unlike some of the cases discussed under the head of delinquency. The

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

school reported that Maxine responded to correction in a cheerful, courteous manner and seemed eager to please. They reported that her chief difficulty was her inability to concentrate.

From the history of the attitude of the adoptive parents toward the child it was clear that Maxine had never enjoyed a sense of security in the family life. She had been made to realize on many occasions that she was not wanted, and her aggressive, resentful, rebellious attitude towards life was but an expression of her mental conflicts over this sense of insecurity.

*Aubrey*, aged sixteen years, was brought to the psychiatrist by his adoptive mother who complained of the boy's outbursts of temper and jealousy. This boy's own mother had died when *Aubrey* was still a baby, and he was left with a father who was not considered by the rest of the family to be sufficiently cultured to bring up his son. He was prevailed upon by the mother's sister to permit his adoption.

*Aubrey's* adoptive mother was just over forty when she took the baby. She was still showing the effects of the severe mental strain she had undergone in the care of her husband who had died shortly before the death of *Aubrey's* mother. She was obviously reaching out for something upon which she might bestow her affections.

At an early age the boy was sent to the best schools and camps, and every effort was made to make a gentleman of him. The adoptive mother resented his lack of affection and many scenes were created because of the emotional demands she made upon the child. The child was torn in conflict between his desire to spend his time with his father, whom he admired for his manly qualities,

## Concerning Parents

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to whom he was quite devoted, but who was unable to compete with the aunt in supplying Aubrey with material advantages, and his willingness to spend life with his aunt who was able to supply him with the luxuries for which he had cultivated a taste. This conflict resulted in hysterical attacks, absolute loss of control of temper, unmanageableness, and other evidences of immaturity.

*Jessie* was an attractive sixteen-year-old girl who was referred to the psychiatrist during the second semester of her first year in boarding school. The head of the school stated that the girl had made few intimate friends, and was making a poor social adjustment; that she got sulky and refused to work; and that she wrote impertinent remarks about the school on her examination papers. She had also written, as an English theme, a very fantastic biography which had created considerable stir.

In conference, this young person at first appeared to be rather sullen and resentful toward the psychiatrist, but soon became more confidential and coöperative. She made it plain that she hated the school, the students, and all forms of organized sports. She complained that she had been teased continually about her family relations ever since she had written the autobiography referred to above.

It appeared that this girl had had a most unusual and unstabilizing background of family life. Both her own parents had died during the first three years of her life, and she had been taken by friends to be cared for temporarily. She had remained with them for a period of three years, at which time she was legally adopted by some distant relatives who were in a position to care for her adequately. These adoptive parents were devoted to

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

her and she to them, and she developed in a normal, happy manner. When she was ten years of age, her adoptive parents were divorced, the home was broken up, and arrangements were made for Jessie to spend most of her time with the kindly, over-solicitous sister of her adoptive mother. In the course of these experiences Jessie had developed a tremendous sense of insecurity, being extremely unhappy over the separation from her parents. Life had begun to seem unbearable and her conflict over this insecurity had begun to manifest itself in her conduct. She became resentful and rebellious. Her school work began to slump, and at the same time she became extremely sensitive to criticism from teachers and fellow students. She often felt slighted and insulted for no adequate reason. She was absolutely lacking in any sense of humor, and would sometimes go around for days wearing a dull, apathetic expression, apparently lost in introspection.

In the course of several months, through coöperation from her parents and the school, this student was helped materially to meet her conflict about parentage, which resulted in a complete reintegration of the child's personality with a happier and more cheerful outlook on life and a good adjustment in school. Moreover, she established a pleasant relationship for herself with both her adoptive mother and her adoptive father, in spite of their separation.

It is invariably wise that the child to be adopted have both an adoptive father and mother. It is important that the adoptive parents be generally compatible as well as in agreement that the specific step they are about to take is going to be to their advantage and for the welfare



## Concerning Parents

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of the child. It is better that these prospective parents be under thirty than over, and the younger the child, the more satisfactory the experience will be to the mother.

There are many reasons why people adopt children and some of them are good and others bad; and so long as the process is administered entirely as a legal matter, so long will there continue to be situations that work out badly for both the adoptive parents and the adopted child. The court requires evidence that the would-be adoptive parents are economically able to support the child, and that, in a general way, their moral status meets with certain minimum standards; but little or nothing is done to safeguard anything more than the material needs of the child. Those who see children that are brought to clinic or private office with the question of whether this child is suitable for adoption should always qualify their answer with the statement, "It depends upon who wants to adopt the child."

Prospective adoptive parents can always find ways of protecting their interests, but who is to appear in the interest of the child and inquire for him, "Why do these people want me? What kind of people are they? Are they thinking of having some one to support them in their old age? Or do they want something to play with for the moment? What have they done to demonstrate that they are capable of bringing up a child? Has it ever occurred to them that I might not have chosen them had I had any say in the matter? How old are these prospective parents of mine? Let them consider how old they will be when I am in need of counsel and advice in early adolescence." These and many more questions relating to physical health, personality make-up, and

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

compatibility of temperaments in the home, and in regard to the feeling about the child might well be asked in his behalf.

To be sure, there are numerous child-placing agencies, both public and private, religious and secular, who do ask just such questions of prospective foster parents. But even these organizations tend to give greater emphasis to the study and examination of the child than to the study and examination of the prospective parents. Moreover, the standards of child-placing agencies are still far from uniformly high, and the pressure of work is often so great that the best of standards are not maintained. But even when all these organizations are doing a high quality of social case work and are protecting the interests of their young charges in the fullest sense of the word, as long as the law does not require the service of these agencies as a part of the legal adoption procedure or provide such service through the courts when the case is unknown to any agency, so long will there continue to be large numbers of unguided and undirected placements and many unhappily adopted children.

### CONCLUSION

It is obvious that all individuals exposed to the situations, both good and bad, that have been described throughout this book do not react in the same way; dwelling on a child's weakness may not lead to an inferiority complex but to intelligent compensation in other directions, and parental favoritism may lead to the development of greater independence rather than unhappy hypersensitivity. Nor is there reason to believe

## Concerning Parents

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that all parents who avoid the mistakes outlined will be blessed with perfect children and an ideal relationship with them. But one does not knowingly steer one's ship for shoals merely because all ships are not wrecked by such procedure.

There is, moreover, always the danger that discussions of this type will lead parents to examine and then blame themselves too critically for what they regard as their shortcomings. Those of us who have had a fairly wide experience with parents are ready to agree with Dr. Blanchard's statement: "We see many conscientious fathers and mothers, after gaining some knowledge of parent-child relationships, who feel exceedingly guilty over acts they have committed before they possessed this information. These guilt feelings only tend to increase and to complicate their own personal problems and to interfere with their own adjustment. Yet the words and the overt acts addressed to the child have far less effect on personality development than the atmosphere of the home and the parents' adjustment to each other and life."<sup>6</sup>

One would be inclined to add to Dr. Blanchard's statement the observation that the psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and whatever other professional groups evolve theories of human behavior—are far too prone to seize upon some one theory as explaining all difficulties, some one doctrine as offering a comprehensive solution to all problems. We need only recall the various theories accounting for criminality to be aware of this. Years ago an effort was made to explain all crimes on the basis of Lombroso's theory that criminals were born, not made.

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<sup>6</sup> Blanchard and Manasses, *New Girls for Old*, p. 27.

## Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems

This explanation presently gave way to the claim that criminal tendencies were due to certain accidents and diseases occurring in early life. Certain endocrinologists next presented the explanation that criminality was due to malfunction of the glands of internal secretion. The psychologists then came along and attributed all crime to poor intellectual endowment, the sociologists to broken homes, and the preachers to the loss of interest and attention to religious thought. Meanwhile, the public at large point to the movies, the incompetency of the police, the indifference of courts, the safety of gang life, the failure of prohibition, the disintegration of the home, and so on.

There is no one solution to all of life's manifold problems, and it is doubtful if one will ever be revealed to us. Neither the individual nor the environment can be standardized; both are ever changing, and changing each independently of the other. Each must be studied in relation to the other.

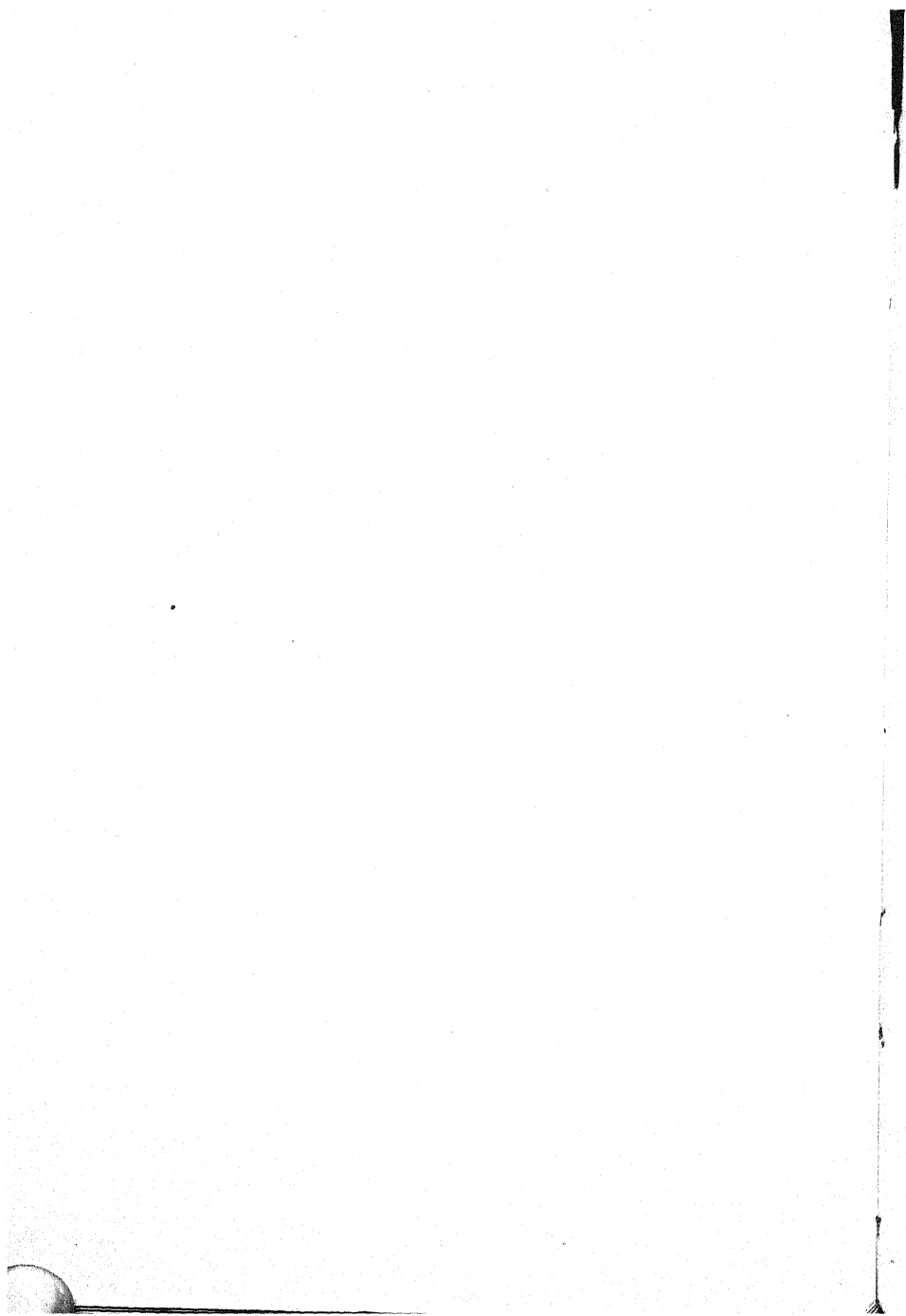
The efficiency with which the adolescent meets his obligations and his responsibilities, the wisdom which he displays in handling his freedom, and the frankness with which he meets life and his own problems, depend to a very large extent upon what he has acquired in the way of habits, mental attitudes and personality traits. These are his stock in trade and the tools with which he must make a place for himself in the social and industrial scheme of life.

It is a wise provision of nature that permits the individual to continue his emotional and intellectual development as the years advance. Habits which become ineffective, or real handicaps, may be discarded and replaced by others which serve more adequately the ado-

## Concerning Parents

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lescent's purpose in life. Personality traits are modified by experience and human contacts. Mental attitudes broaden, become more tolerant, and frequently more intellectual and less emotional in their content. Therefore, as the adolescent who is becoming adjusted to life advances toward the goal of maturity he finds himself more and more in harmony with himself and society than he has ever been before. Society's contribution to his ultimate welfare will come through an effort to understand the close relationship that exists between the conduct of the adolescent and the environment in which he has to work out his own strivings. The most important aspect of this environment is people, and the most important people are parents and teachers. It is to these two groups in particular that youth must look for guidance.



## INDEX

- Adolescence, Chap. I, 1; among civilized peoples, 4-5; among primitive peoples, 2; as period of experimentation, 12; confusion with puberty, 1; connotations of, 1; definition of, 2; effect of times on, 11; guidance of, 12; lack of social guidance in, 42; need of security in, 132; need of self-confidence in, 125; primitive and civilized compared, 4; primitive tribal rites of, 2-3, 4; problems of, 6*ff.*; responsibility toward parent-child relationship and, 344
- Adoptive and foster parents, 351; attitude toward child of, 352; problems of (*Maxine*), 353, (*Aubrey*), 354, (*Jessie*), 355; responsibility toward child of, 356
- Adulthood undefined, 5-6
- Alcoholism, 246
- Averill, Lawrence, 108, 109
- Awkwardness, 25. *See also* Posture.
- Bed-wetting, 189
- Behavior problems, in educational institutions, 273*ff.*; in industry, 305*ff.*; in secondary schools, 276, 296. *See also* Conduct problems, Environmental problems, Personality problems, Physical growth, Sex.
- Benson, E. F., 6
- Blanchard, Phyllis, 39, 40, 45, 46, 54, 359
- Boarding school, 327
- Brooks, Fowler D., 73
- "Bundling," 67
- Burnham, William H., 122
- Cabot, Richard C., 216
- Cheating, 234; causes of, 234, 235; forms of, 235
- College, importance of selection of, 328, 335
- Conduct, definition of, 185; interpretation of, 185; modern conflicts of, 267-270
- Conduct problems, Chap. VII, 182, Chap. VIII, 214; bed-wetting (*Frederick*), 189; causes of, 186; cheating (*Angela*), 236, (*Georgia*), 237, (*Gilbert*), 238; daydreaming, 204; delinquency, 215; examples of, 187; fault-finding (*Norma*), 197; lack of friends, 205, (*Ada*), 208, (*Miriam*), 209, (*Hugh*), 209, (*Rebecca*), 211, (*Elena*), 211; nervous mannerisms (*Malcolm*), 191; neuroses (*Alga*), 259, (*Effie*), 260, (*Rose*), 260, (*Dick*), 261; outward manifestation of, 200; romancing, 201, (*Eu-*

# Index

Conduct problems (*cont'd*)  
*nice*, 202, (*Arthur*), 203; running away (*Coleman*), 242, (*Ted*), 244; stammering (*Josephine*), 193; stealing (*Neal*), 223, (*Wendell*), 227, (*Arnold*), 228, (*Sarah*), 230, (*Lynn*), 231, (*Bill*), 232; unhappiness (*Frank*), 196, (*Lillian*), 199; "Unmanageableness" (*Girard*), 249, (*Viola*), 252, (*Herbert*), 253, (*Willard*), 255; weeping (*Hazel*), 194. *See also* Behavior problems, Environmental problems, Personality problems.  
 "Crush." *See* Homosexuality.

Dalton plan, 109

Davis, Katherine B., 39

Day school, 326; function of, 327

Daydreaming, 204

Delinquency, 215; causes of, 87, 217; indulgence toward, 42; methods of treatment of, 218-221; statistics on, 217; study of, 222; treatment of, 216

Dell, Floyd, 64, 66, 70

Drinking, 246

Eating habits, 17

Education, Chap. X, 318; æsthetic value of, 333; aristocratic and democratic view of, 323; boarding-school, 327; college, 324; day-school, 326; failure of, 318; ideal of, 319; limitations of, 86; monetary value of, 332; need of, 331; parent - teacher coöperation, 326; parental responsibility,

325; purpose of, 320; secondary-school, 323; social value of, 333; specialization in, 319; special plans for, 108; "The Democratic View," 322

Educational maladjustments, Chap. VI, 152; causes of:

emotional handicaps, 163, (*Celia*), 165, (*Priscilla*), 166, (*Curtis*), 166, (*Faith*), 168, (*Arthur*), 170, (*Harold H.*), 173, (*Hugo*), 173, (*Bessie and Jack*), 173, (*Myrtle G.*), 175, (*Marianna*), 177, (*Walter*), 179; extra-curricular activities, 159-161; inadequate preparation (*Mercedes*), 157, (*Milton*), 158; lack of interest or motivation, 158, (*Winthrop*), 159, (*Burton*), 160, (*Susannah*), 163; parental ambition, 172-174, 177-180;

definition of, 156; in higher education, 155; relation to emotional growth, 163; relation to intellectual inferiority, 153, 156, 177-180; statistics on, 152, 153; treatment of, 155. *See also* Environmental problems.

Ellis, Havelock, 37

Emotional growth, 144; adjustments to, 147ff.; causes of, 146; development of, 147; relation to educational maladjustments, 163; relation to physical and mental growth, 145

Emotional handicaps, 163ff.

Environment, adjustment to,



271, 305, 335; effect on adolescence, 10; importance of, 361

Environmental [redacted] homosexuality, 297, [redacted] (Madoline), 302, [redacted] 303; in educational [redacted] tions, 273, (Beryl), 278, (Larry), 279, (Frieda), 281, (Selma), 281, (Nathan), 282, (Elsie), 284, (Stanley), 284, (Louise), 285, (Lucille), 286, (Edna), 288, (Harvey), 291, (Winfield), 293, (Wilbur), 293, (Sidney), 294, (Sam), 295, (Peggy), 296; in industry, 305-316, (Clara), 307, (Mabel), 309, (Harry), 311, (Lee), 314. *See also* Behavior problems.

Fault-finding, 197

Flexner, Abraham, 277

Freud, Sigmund, 37, 60, 183

Friendships, 205-211

Furfey, Paul Haley, 113

Gesell, Arnold, 113

Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor T., 216

Gosse, Edmund, 143

Groves, Ernest R., 45, 54

Habits. *See* Conduct problems.

Heterosexuality, 66

Homosexuality, 60; attitude toward, 64; causes of, 63; classes of, 64; development of, 63; effect of environment on, 65;

symptoms, results, causes of, 297; variations of, 298

Illness, mental attitude toward (Everett), 33, (Ruth), 34, (Mildred), 35; parental responsibility in, 32; relation to educational maladjustments of (Susannah), 163

Immaturity, 114-122; relation to educational maladjustments of (Celia), 165

Independence, 125, 146; intellectual, 142; lack of, 126; relation to educational maladjustments of (Priscilla), 166

Inferiority, relation to "unmanageableness" of, 248

Intellectual ability. *See* Mental growth.

Intellectual independence, 142

Intellectual inferiority, 78; causes of (Albert), 80, (Bertram), 85; parental responsibility in, 78, 79; relation to educational maladjustments of, 153, 156, 177-180; treatment of (Ellis), 79, (Albert), 80, (Vincent), 83, (Bertram), 85. *See also* Special talent.

Intellectual mediocrity, 87; treatment of (Warren), 89, (John), 92, (Philip), 93; variations of, 95, 98. *See also* Special talent.

Intellectual superiority, 99; effects of, 102; recognition of, 110, (Regina), 101; relation to special talent of, 105; social adjustment and, 100, 103, 109;

# Index

- Intellectual superiority (*cont'd*)  
special education for, 108. *See also* Special talent.
- Intelligence tests, 75; value of, 75, 76
- "I. Q.," 75
- Leadership, 109
- MacCurdy, Dr. John T., 295
- Manasses, Carolyn, 39, 40, 359
- Mann, Thomas, 341
- Masturbation, 54; old and new attitudes toward, 38; treatment of, 41, 55, (*Roland*), 56, (*Julia*), 58
- Maturity, definition of, 122; measurement of, 111*ff.*, 122; obligations of, 141; signs of, 15
- Mead, Margaret, 4
- Menninger, Karl, 275
- Menstruation, 15; attitude toward, 20; effect on adolescent, 19, (*Gertrude A.*), 20. *See also* Sex, instruction in.
- Mental growth, 73; "average," 87; development of, 73, 75; measurement of, 88, 95; rate of, 74; relation to physical growth of, 75, 99, (*Bertram*), 85; relation to vocation of, 305; retarded, 153; special abilities and disabilities and, 95, 98, (*Francis*), 97
- Mental health, relation to physical health of, 256. *See also* Neuroses.
- Mental hygiene, in colleges, 274
- "Monthly period." *See* Menstruation.
- Moral attitudes, 43
- Morgan, Joy Elmer, 322
- Nervousness, 191
- Neuroses, 256*ff.*; causes of, 258; symptoms of, 257
- Nocturnal emission, 15, 18. *See also* Sex, instruction in.
- "Normative summaries," 113
- Obscenity. *See* Sex talk and reading.
- Overgrowth, (*Jim*), 24, (*Bertram*), 85
- Parent-child relationship, 10, 29, 32, 43, 47, 49, 71, 78, 164, 184, 248, 325; adoptive and foster parents and, 351; among civilized peoples, 338; among primitive peoples, 337; attitude of mother in, 343; emancipation of child in, 349; ideal of, 337, 340; love in, 340; mistakes of parents in, 341, 346; responsibility of child in, 344; responsibility of parents in, 340
- Pearson, Gerald H. J., 351
- Peck, Martin W., 183
- Personality, Chap. V, 111
- Personality problems, hatred of child for parent (*Felicia*), 128; immaturity (*Eugene*), 114, (*Caroline*), 116, (*Marguerite*), 118, (*Kenneth*), 119; lack of independence (*Ralph*), 126; need of security (*Evangeline*), 133, (*Nancy*), 135, (*Gordon*), 136; parent-child understanding (*Janice*), 131.

## Index

- See also* Conduct problems,  
Environmental problems.
- Petting, 67; as sex indulgence,  
68; dangers of, 70
- Physical growth, 14; behavior  
problems and, 23; problems  
of, 23; relation to education  
of, 287; relation to mental  
growth of, 75, 99, (*Bertram*),  
85; reproductive system in,  
15. *See also* Awkwardness,  
Overgrowth, Posture.
- Physical health, importance of,  
35; relation to mental health  
of, 256
- Physical hygiene, 16. *See also*  
Eating habits, Sleep.
- Posture, 27; mental attitude toward  
(*Sue*), 28
- Problems of adolescence, intellectual,  
emotional, physical,  
7-8
- Prohibition, 68; influence on sex  
of, 68
- Psychoanalysis, 183
- Puberty, 15; signs of, 16
- Recreation, 139
- Robie, W. F., 40
- Romancing, 201-203
- Running away, 239; causes of,  
240, 245
- Secondary schools, function of,  
319; ideal of, 323
- Self-confidence, 124; relation to  
educational maladjustments of  
(*Curtis*), 166
- Sex, as topic of conversation,  
37, 48; experimentation in,  
46; instruction in, 18, 21, 47,  
50; modern attitude toward,  
38, 69; normal attitude toward,  
44, 60; parental responsibility,  
43, 71; regulation of, 42, 45, 46;  
relation to physical, intellectual,  
emotional growth of, 44. *See also*  
Heterosexuality, Homosexuality,  
Masturbation, Petting.
- Sex behavior, 46
- Sex drives, adjustment to, Chap.  
III, 37
- Sex practices, problems involved,  
40
- Sex sublimation, 45
- Sex talk and reading, 48; dangers  
of, 54; parental responsibility,  
49; treatment of (*Morton*),  
51, (*Helen*), 52
- Skin disorders, 29; mental effects  
of (*Jean*), 30, (*Lester*),  
31
- Sleep, 17
- Special talent, 103; dangers of,  
106; handling of (*Lewis*),  
106; importance of, 104
- Spending-money, 138; earned  
141
- Stammering, 193
- Stealing, 223; motives for, 9
- Stearns, A. Warren, 242
- Taft, Jessie, 150
- Teachers, responsibility toward  
adolescence of, 10, 43, 110. *See*  
*also* Education.
- Terman, Lewis M., 99, 103,  
105
- Trotter, William, 265
- Truancy. *See* Running away.
- Unhappiness, 196, 199

## Index

Universities, functions of, 324  
"Unmanageableness," 246; causes  
of, 247; treatment of, 248

Van Waters, Miriam, 112, 240,  
241, 339

Vocational guidance, 306, 316

Vocations, adjustment to, 305;  
selection of, 306; specialization  
of, 306

Weeping, 194

White House Conference on  
Child Health and Protection,  
132, 319

Wilbur, Ray Lyman, 319

Wile, Ira S., 156

Williams, Frankwood E., 62, 67

Winnetka plan, 109

Winsor, Frederick, 320, 323

Work, 141

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